BY PETER B. GILLIS & GORDON PURCELL

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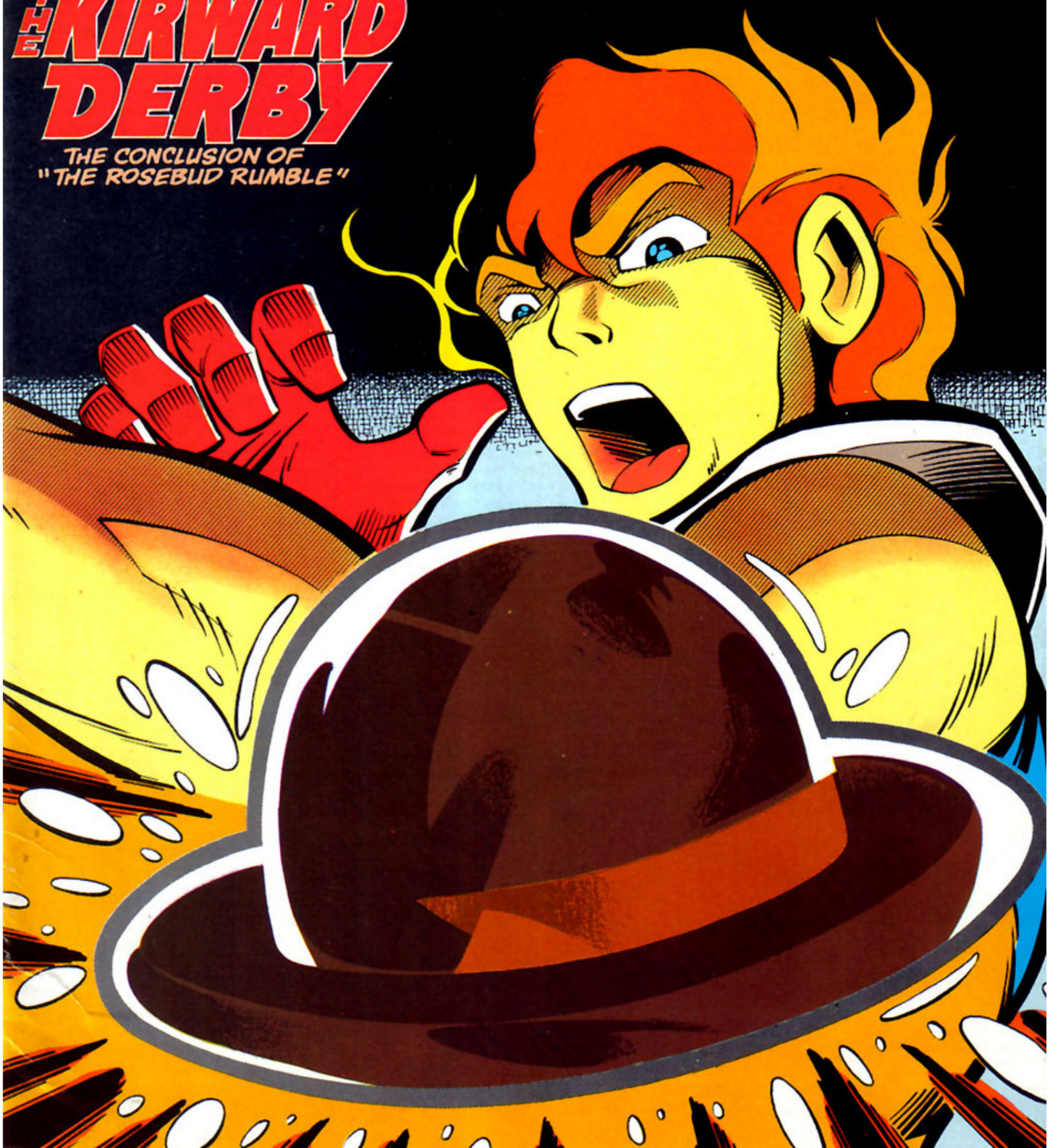
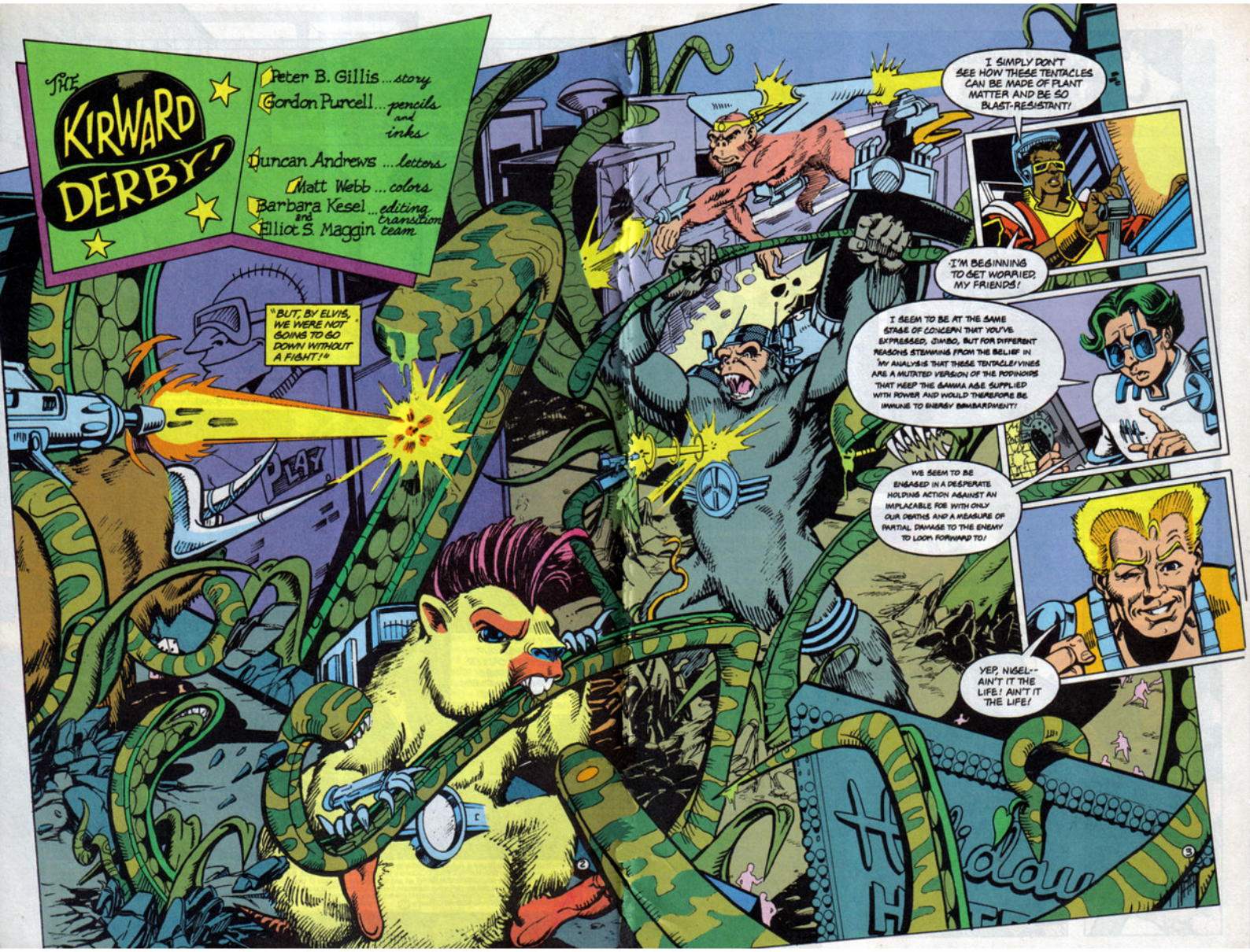
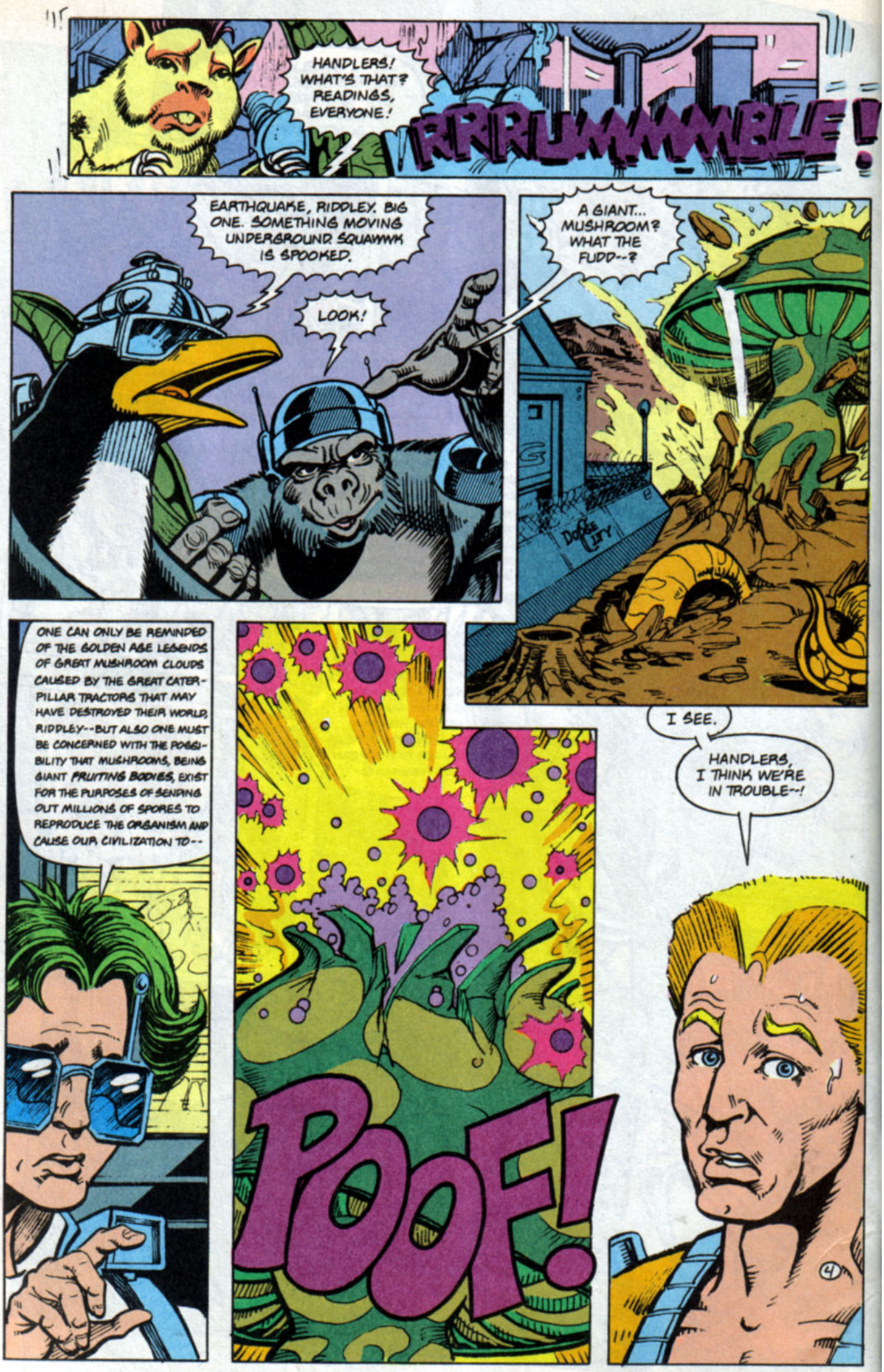
GAMMARAUDERS™

THE KIRWARD DERBY

THE CONCLUSION OF "THE ROSEBUD RUMBLE"




THE KIRWARD DERBY!
Peter B. Gillis ... story
Gordon Purcell ... pencils and inks
Duncan Andrews ... letters
Matt Webb ... colors
Barbara Kesel and Elliot S. Maggin ... editing transition team
"BUT, BY ELVIS, WE WERE NOT GOING TO GO DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!"
I SIMPLY DON'T SEE HOW THESE TENTACLES CAN BE MADE OF PLANT MATTER AND BE SO BLAST-RESISTANT!
I'M BEGINNING TO GET WORRIED, MY FRIENDS!
I SEEM TO BE AT THE SAME STAGE OF CONCERN THAT YOU'VE EXPRESSED, JIMBO, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS STEMMING FROM THE BELIEF IN MY ANALYSIS THAT THESE TENTACLE/VINES ARE A MUTATED VERSION OF THE PODINOIDS THAT KEEP THE GAMMA AGE SUPPLIED WITH POWER AND WOULD THEREFORE BE IMMUNE TO ENERGY BOMBARDMENT!
WE SEEM TO BE ENGAGED IN A DESPERATE HOLDING ACTION AGAINST AN IMPLACABLE FOE WITH ONLY OUR DEATHS AND A MEASURE OF PARTIAL DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY TO LOOK FORWARD TO!
YEP, NIGEL-- AIN'T IT THE LIFE! AIN'T IT THE LIFE!


HANDLERS! WHAT'S THAT? READINGS, EVERYONE!
RRRRUMMMMBLE!
EARTHQUAKE, RIDDLEY. BIG ONE. SOMETHING MOVING UNDERGROUND. SQUAWWK IS SPOOKED.
LOOK!
A GIANT... MUSHROOM? WHAT THE FUDD--?
ONE CAN ONLY BE REMINDED OF THE GOLDEN AGE LEGENDS OF GREAT MUSHROOM CLOUDS CAUSED BY THE GREAT CATERPILLAR TRACTORS THAT MAY HAVE DESTROYED THEIR WORLD, RIDDLEY--BUT ALSO ONE MUST BE CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT MUSHROOMS, BEING GIANT FRUITING BODIES, EXIST FOR THE PURPOSES OF SENDING OUT MILLIONS OF SPORES TO REPRODUCE THE ORGANISM AND CAUSE OUR CIVILIZATION TO--
POOF!
I SEE.
HANDLERS, I THINK WE'RE IN TROUBLE--!
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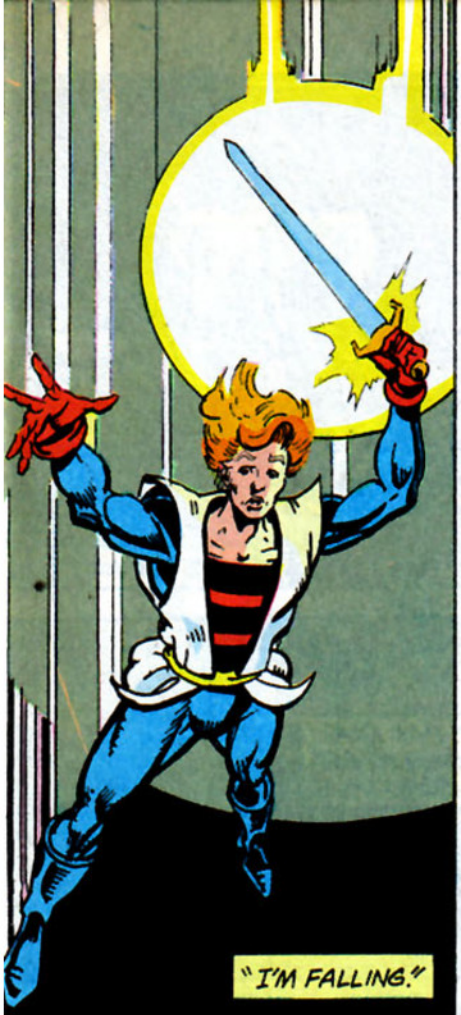
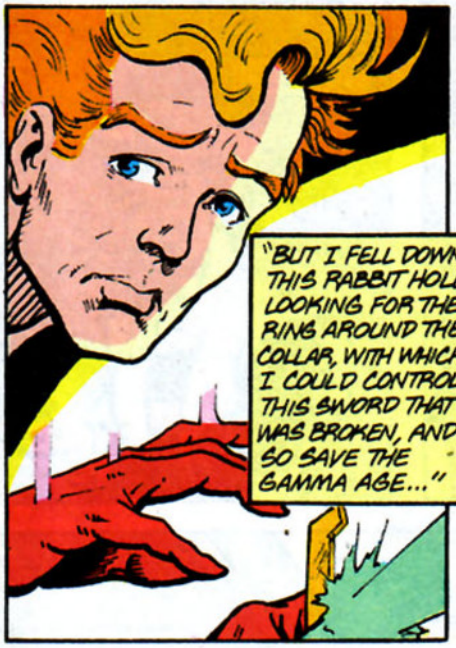
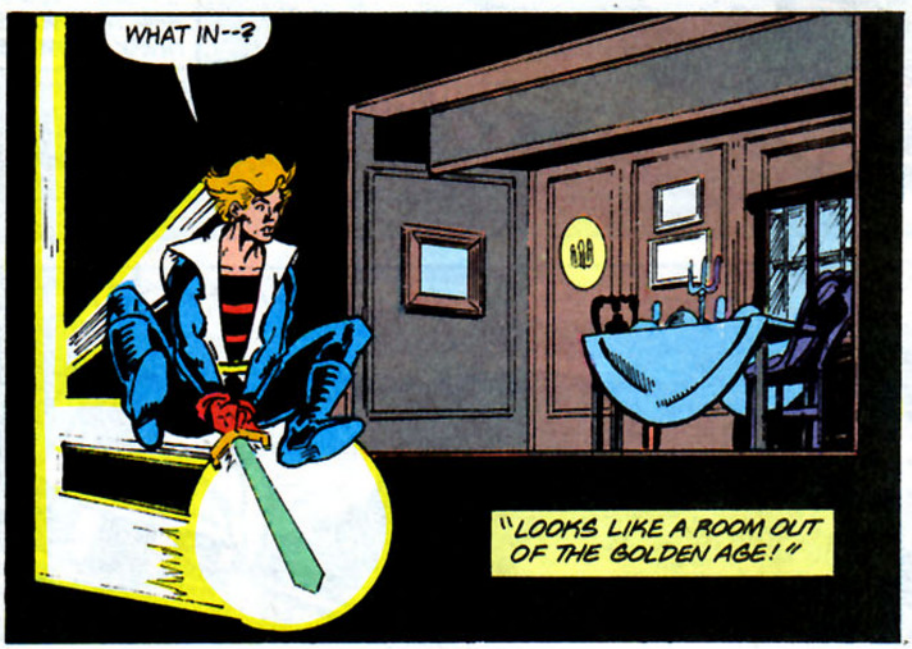
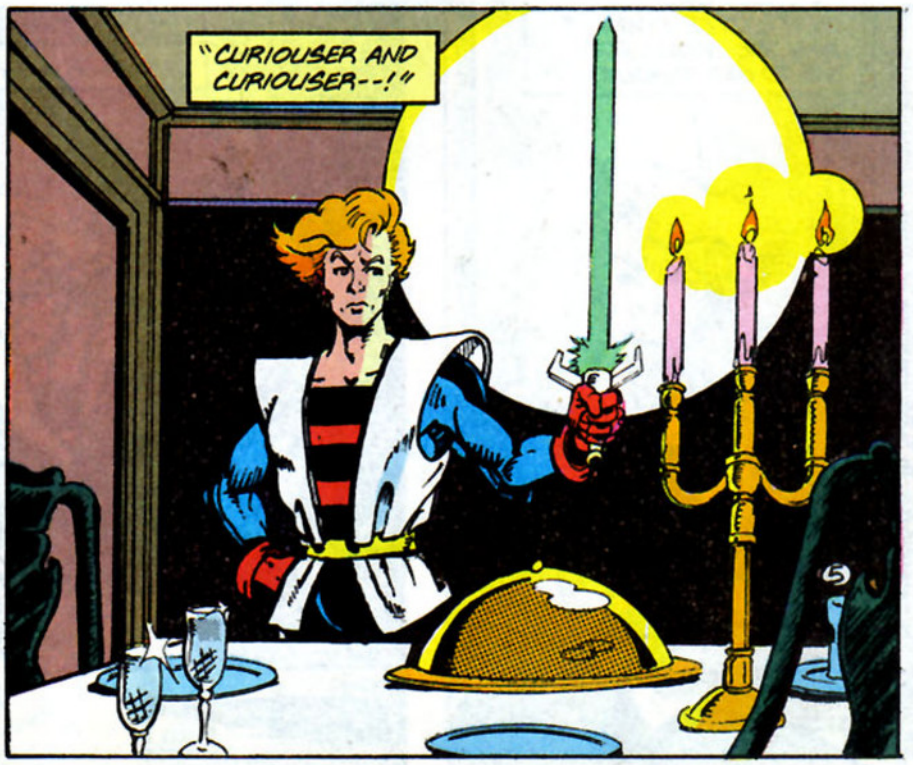


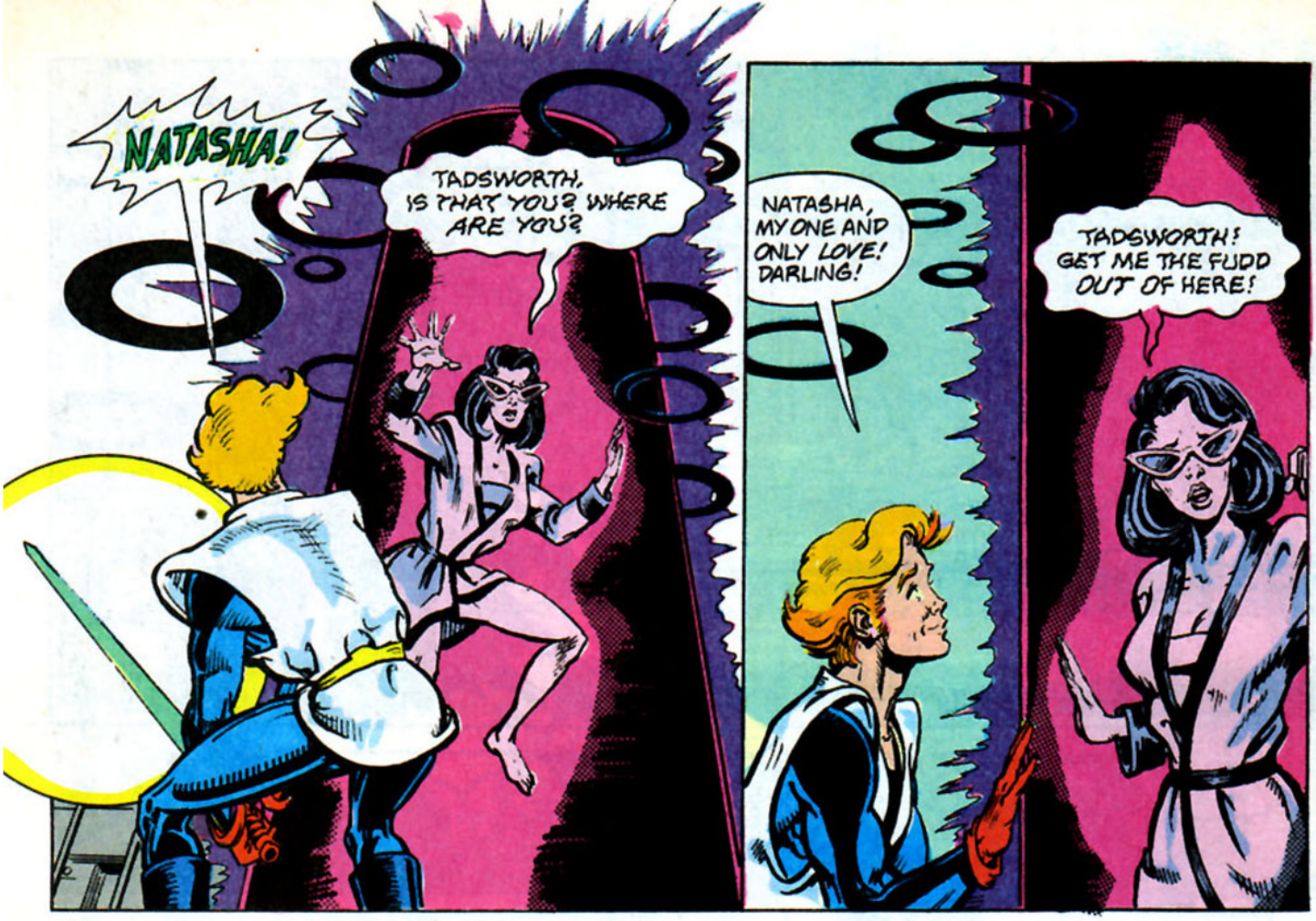


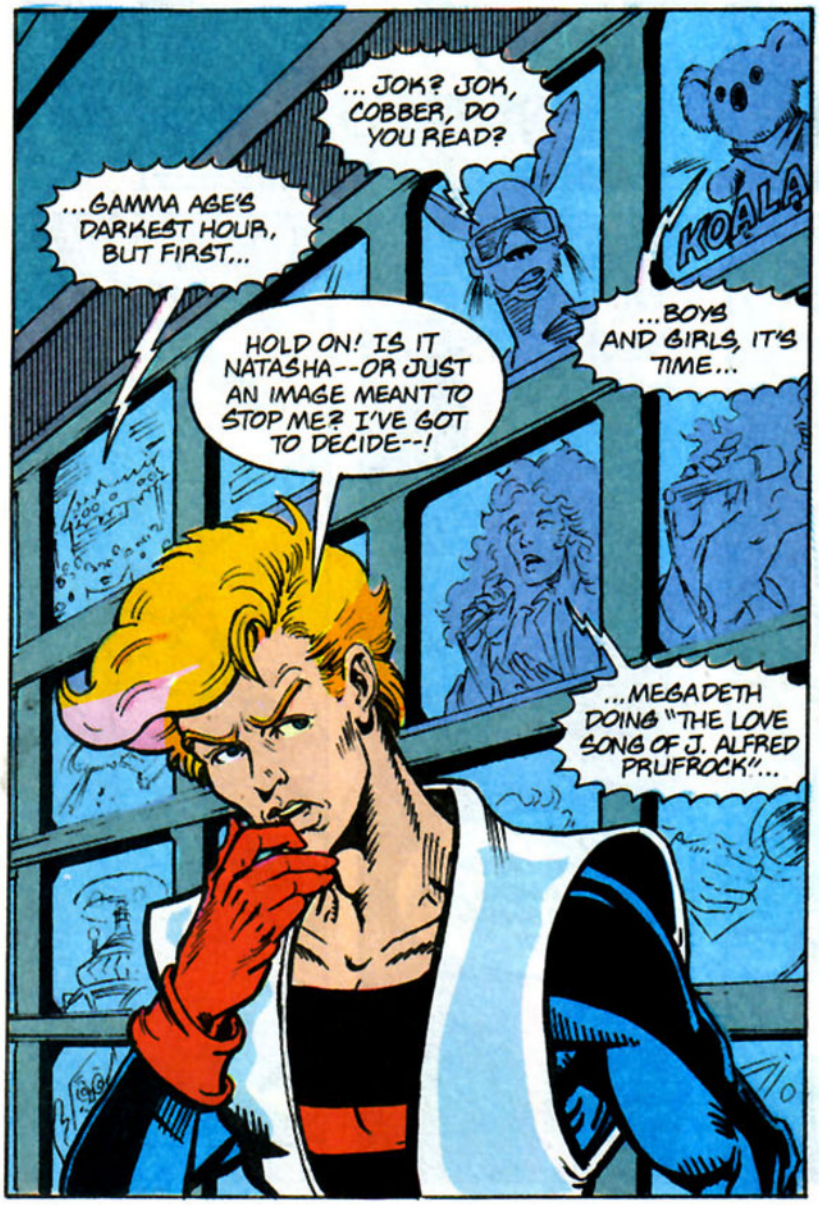
"OR MAYBE I'M FLOATING. HARD TO TELL WHEN THERE'S NOTHING BUT BLACKNESS ALL AROUND."

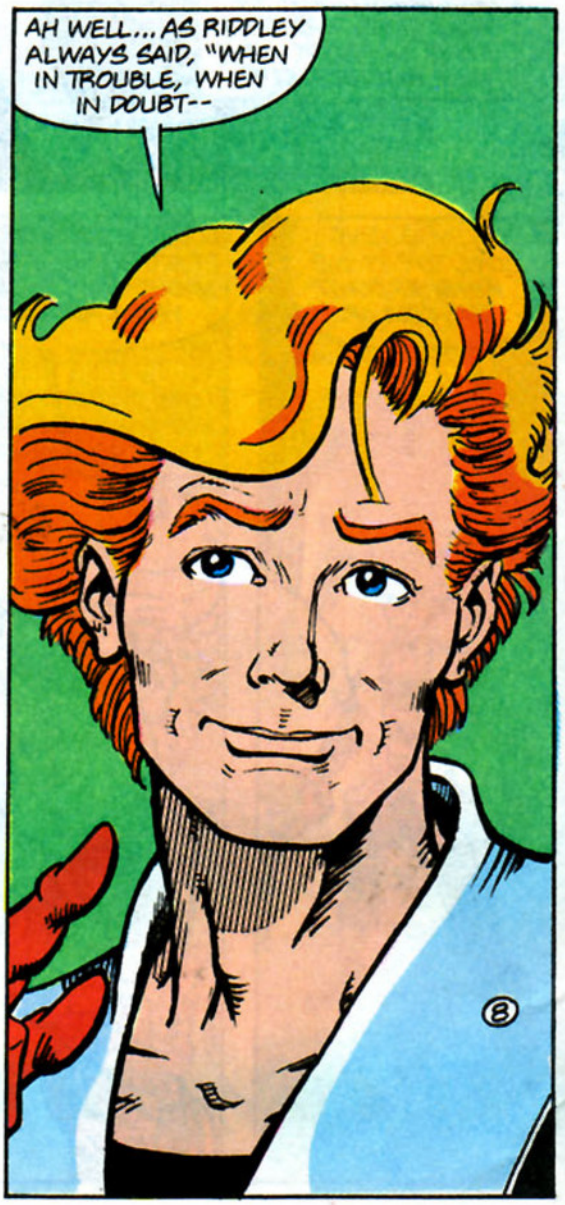


"SCARY? YES. I WOULD SAY WITHOUT HESITATION THAT I'M SCARED."




NATASHA!
TADSWORTH, IS THAT YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?
NATASHA, MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE! DARLING!
TADSWORTH! GET ME THE FUDD OUT OF HERE!


...JOK? JOK, COBBER, DO YOU READ?
...GAMMA AGE'S DARKEST HOUR, BUT FIRST...
HOLD ON! IS IT NATASHA--OR JUST AN IMAGE MEANT TO STOP ME? I'VE GOT TO DECIDE--!
...BOYS AND GIRLS, IT'S TIME...
...MEGADETH DOING "THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK"...
KOALA


AH WELL... AS RIDDLEY ALWAYS SAID, "WHEN IN TROUBLE, WHEN IN DOUBT--
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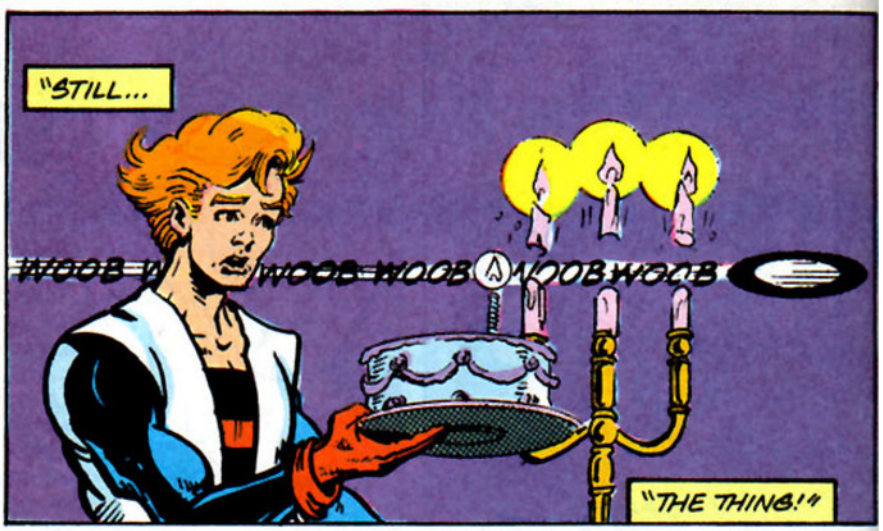
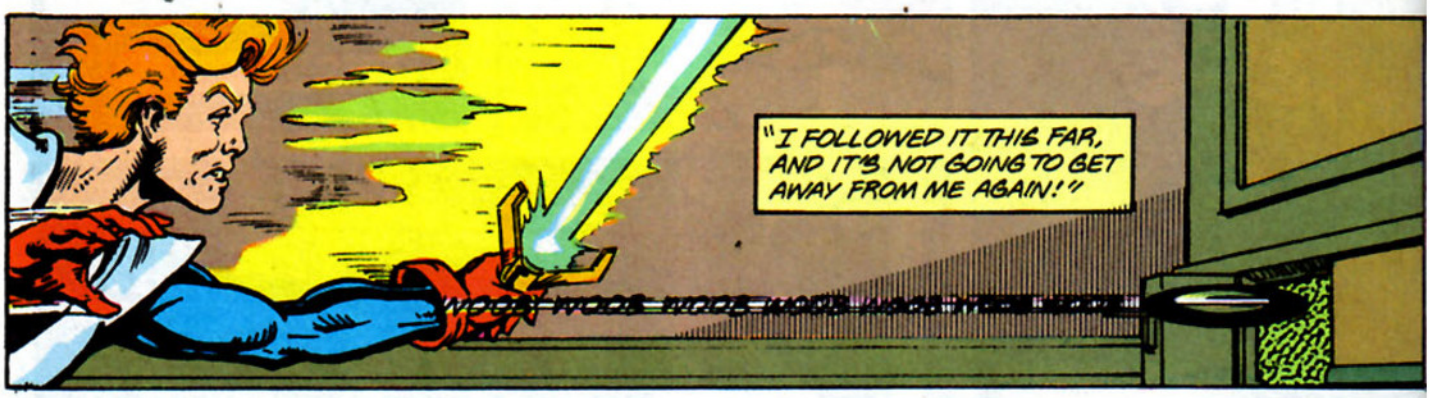
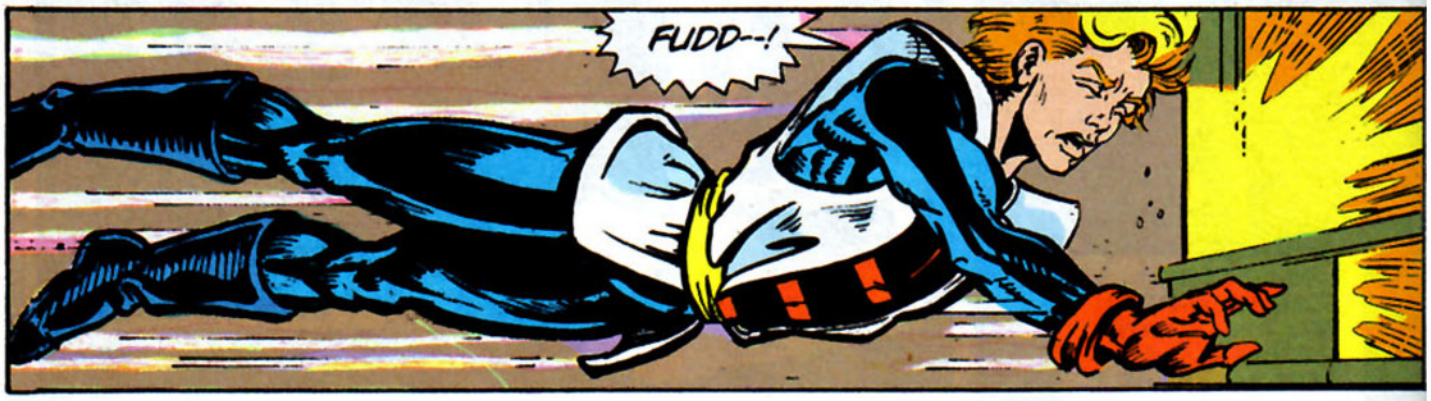
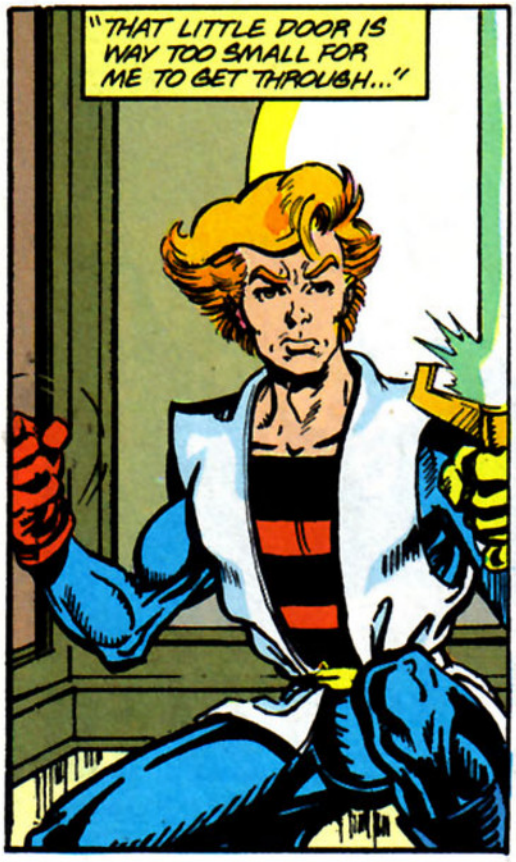
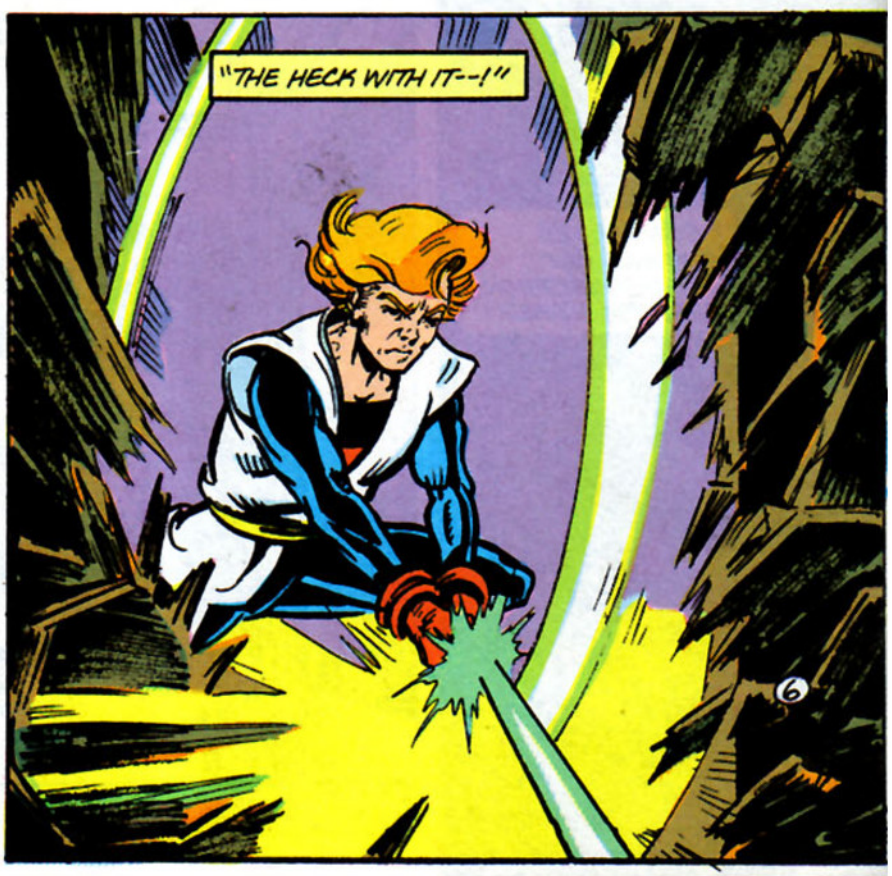
"SHOULD I?
EAT ME!
"I'D HAVE TO BE A COMPLETE IDIOT TO TRY IT JUST BECAUSE IT SAYS 'EAT ME'."


"STILL...
WOOB WOOB WOOB WOOB WOOB
"THE THING!"

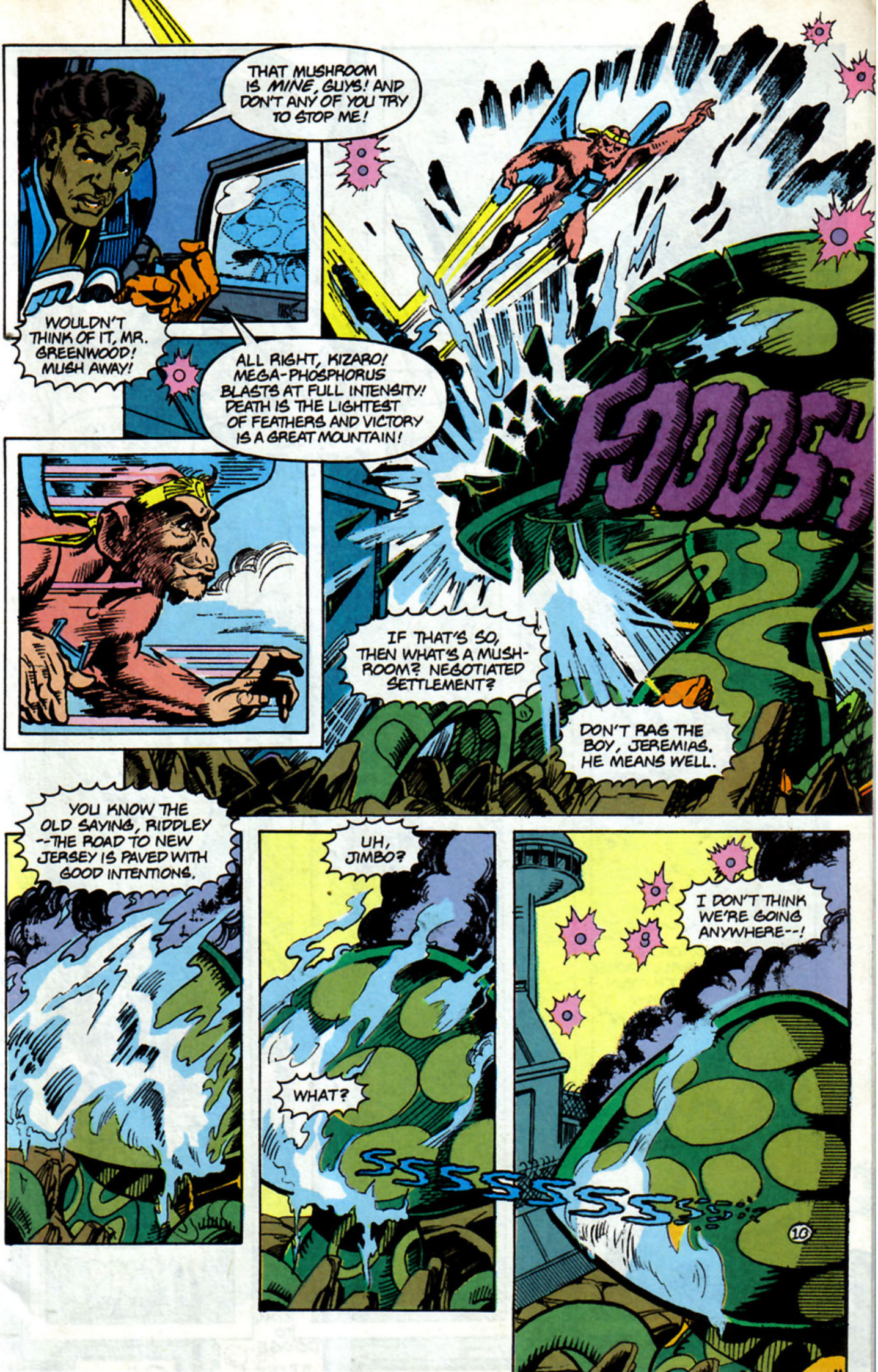

"I FOLLOWED IT THIS FAR, AND IT'S NOT GOING TO GET AWAY FROM ME AGAIN!"


FUDD--!


"THAT LITTLE DOOR IS WAY TOO SMALL FOR ME TO GET THROUGH..."


"THE HECK WITH IT--!"

"--HIT SOMETHING!"
WOOB WOOB WOOB WOOB
OK, IT WASN'T NATASHA. BUT--WHAT DO I DO NOW?
NO--THE LIGHT--!
CAN'T... BREATHE...!
9


THAT MUSHROOM IS MINE, GUYS! AND DON'T ANY OF YOU TRY TO STOP ME!
WOULDN'T THINK OF IT, MR. GREENWOOD! MUSH AWAY!
ALL RIGHT, KIZARO! MEGA-PHOSPHORUS BLASTS AT FULL INTENSITY! DEATH IS THE LIGHTEST OF FEATHERS AND VICTORY IS A GREAT MOUNTAIN!
FOOOSH
IF THAT'S SO, THEN WHAT'S A MUSH-ROOM? NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT?
DON'T RAG THE BOY, JEREMIAS. HE MEANS WELL.
YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING, RIDDLEY --THE ROAD TO NEW JERSEY IS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS.
UH, JIMBO?
WHAT?
SSSSSSSSS
I DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING ANYWHERE--!
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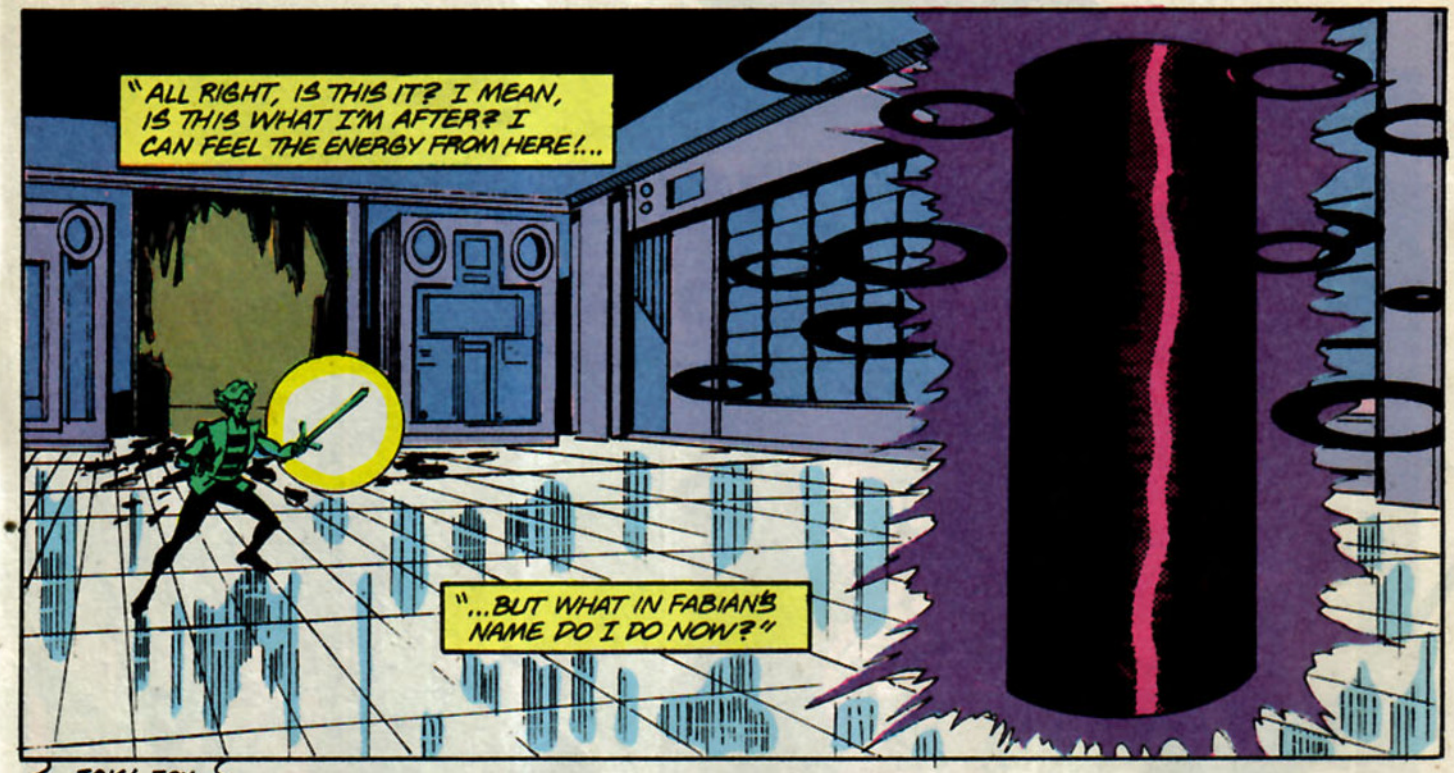
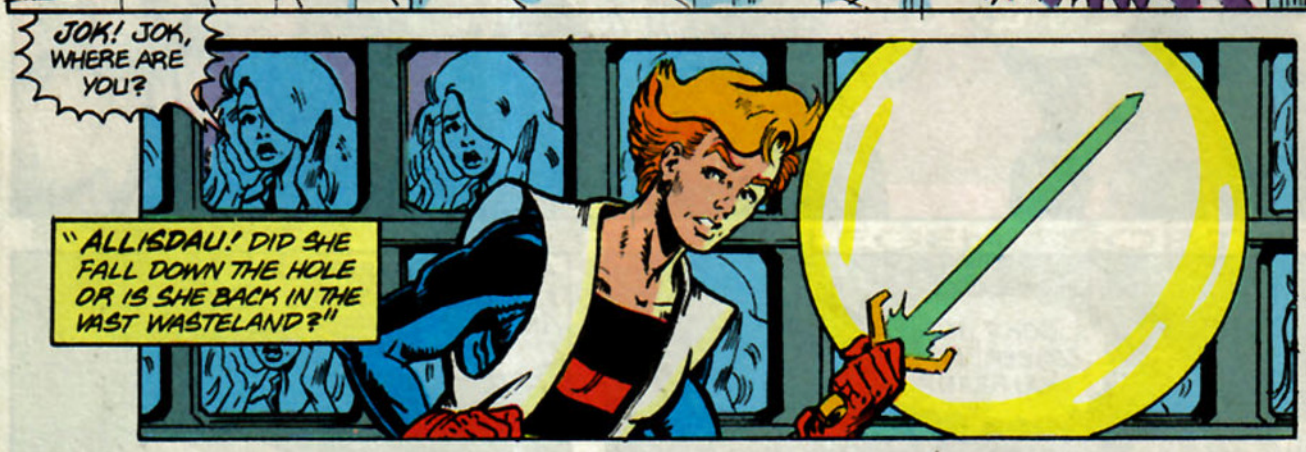
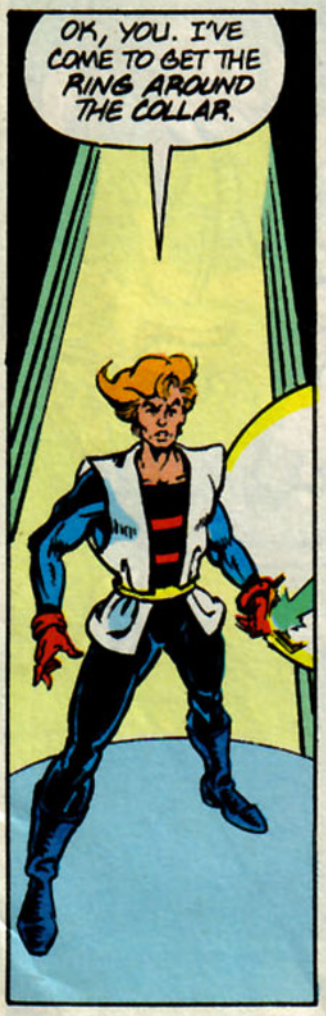
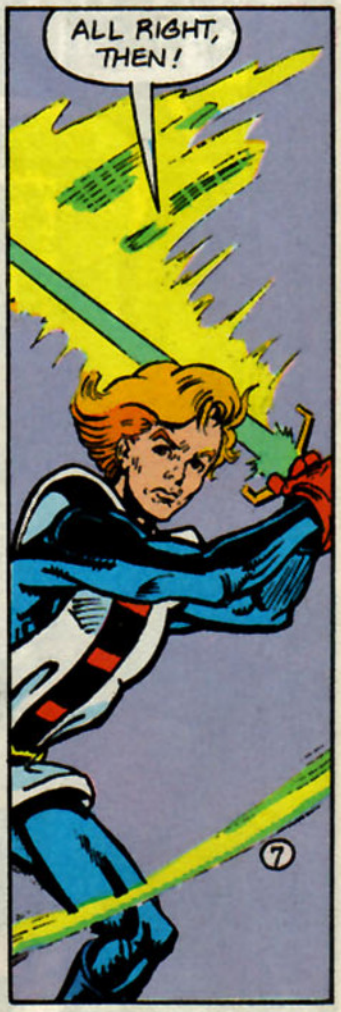

"ALL RIGHT, IS THIS IT? I MEAN, IS THIS WHAT I'M AFTER? I CAN FEEL THE ENERGY FROM HERE!...
"...BUT WHAT IN FABIAN'S NAME DO I DO NOW?"

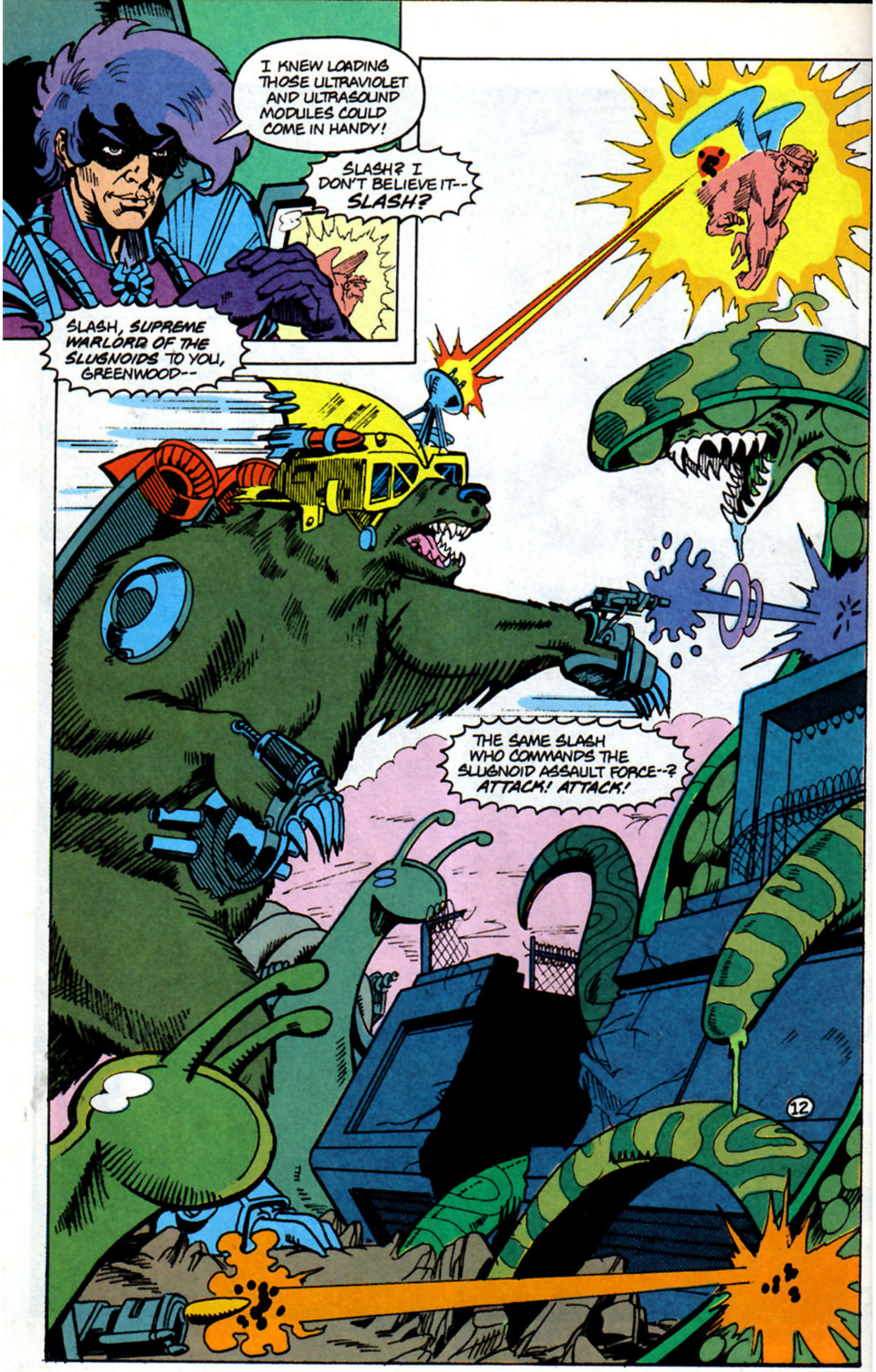

JOK! JOK, WHERE ARE YOU?
"ALLISDAU! DID SHE FALL DOWN THE HOLE OR IS SHE BACK IN THE VAST WASTELAND?"

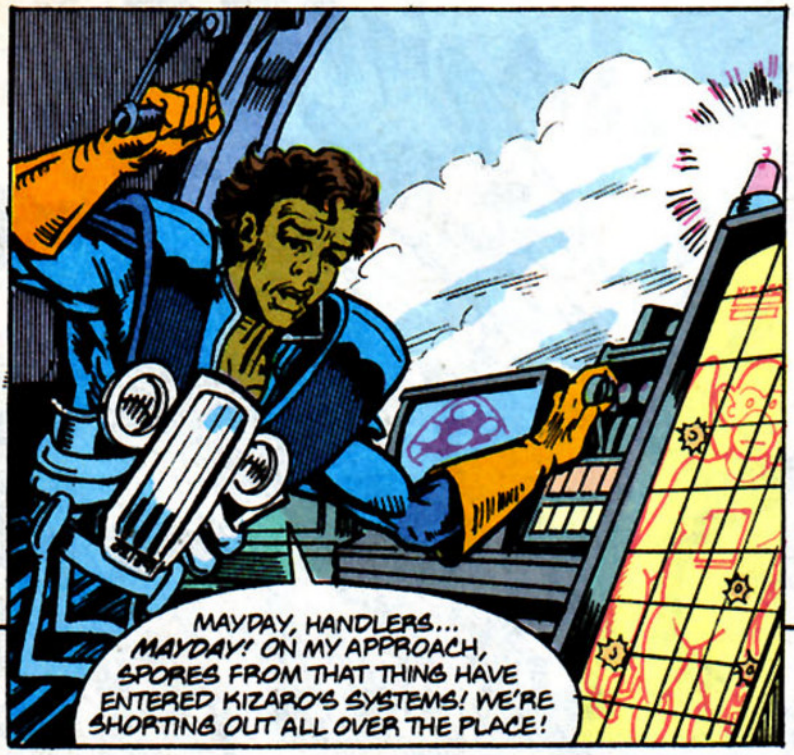

OK, YOU. I'VE COME TO GET THE RING AROUND THE COLLAR.

LOOK, IT'S IMPORTANT! IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MIGHT SAVE THE WORLD FROM ROSEBUD!

IF YOU DON'T-- PAY ATTENTION, OR SHOW ME WHERE IT IS, I'LL START SWINGING THIS SWORD!

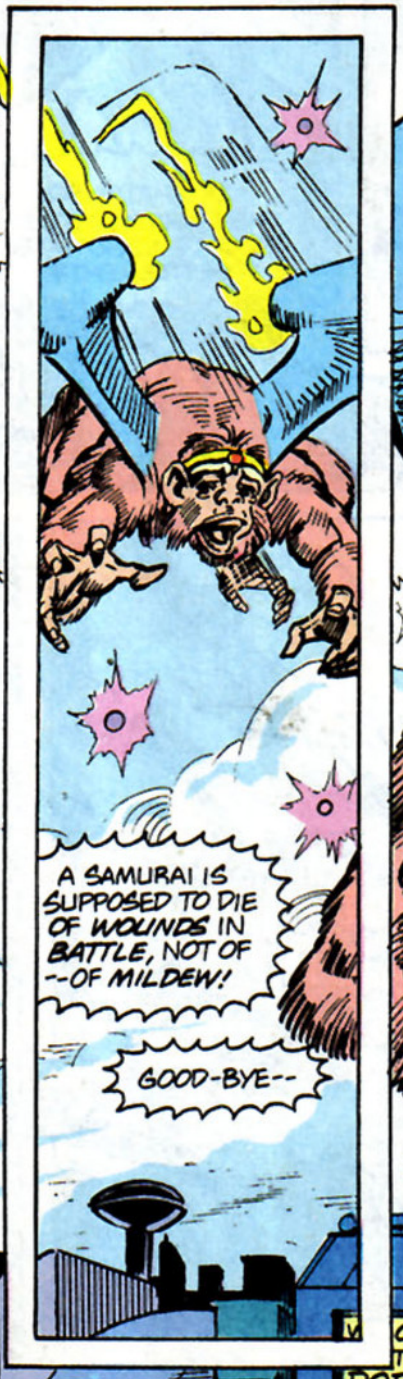

ALL RIGHT, THEN!


I KNEW LOADING THOSE ULTRAVIOLET AND ULTRASOUND MODULES COULD COME IN HANDY!
SLASH? I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- SLASH?
SLASH, SUPREME WARLORD OF THE SLUGNOIDS TO YOU, GREENWOOD--
THE SAME SLASH WHO COMMANDS THE SLUGNOID ASSAULT FORCE--? ATTACK! ATTACK!
12


MAYDAY, HANDLERS... MAYDAY! ON MY APPROACH, SPORES FROM THAT THING HAVE ENTERED KIZARO'S SYSTEMS! WE'RE SHORTING OUT ALL OVER THE PLACE!

HANG ON, KIZARO! STABILIZE AND FIGHT IT!
NO CAN DO, CHUCK! WE'RE GOING DOWN!

PUT PUT
PHEW
NO! OH NO! THIS IS ALL WRONG! IT CAN'T HAPPEN THIS WAY!


A SAMURAI IS SUPPOSED TO DIE OF WOUNDS IN BATTLE, NOT OF --OF MILDEW!
GOOD-BYE--

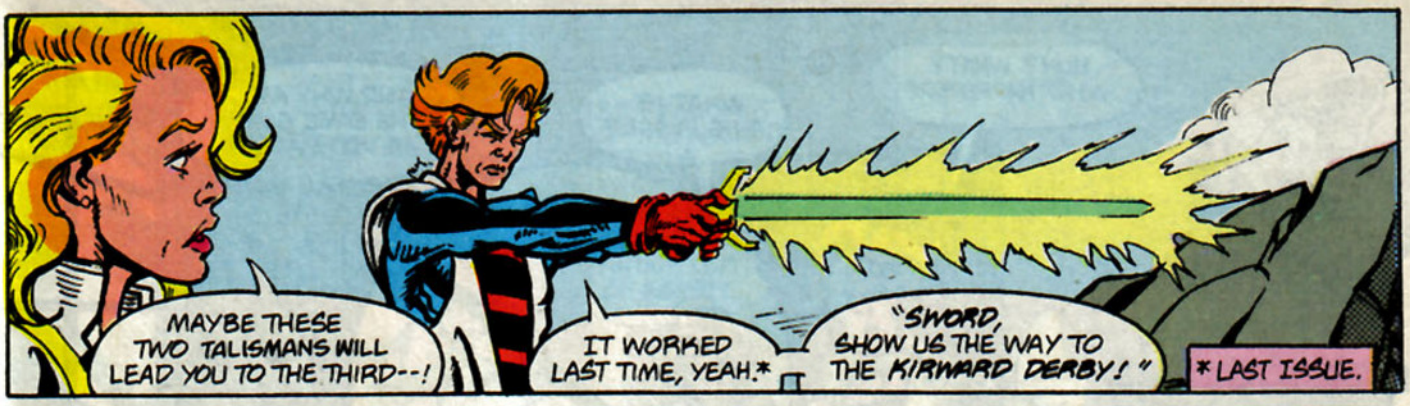
--HUH?
WE'RE CLEAN--!

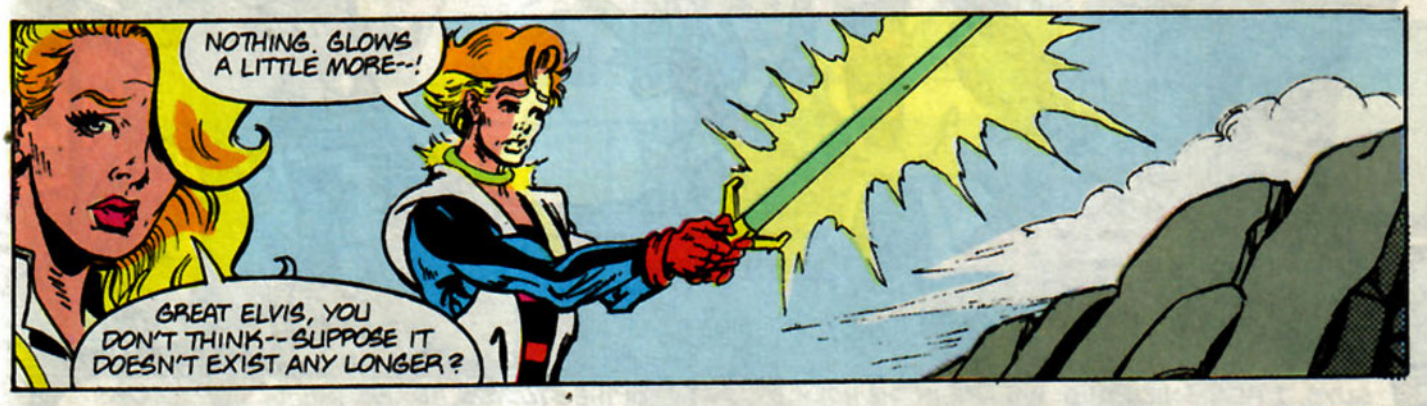
YOU FIEND! YOU WON'T ESCAPE THE BLISTERING HEAT OF MY VENGEANCE THIS TIME! PREPARE TO DIE!

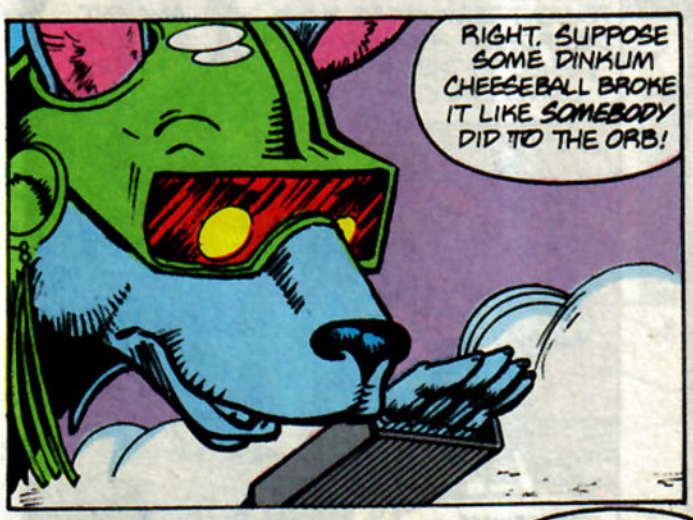
I'LL--
YOU'LL BEHAVE, MCMANN. FUN'S FUN, BUT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES HERE.

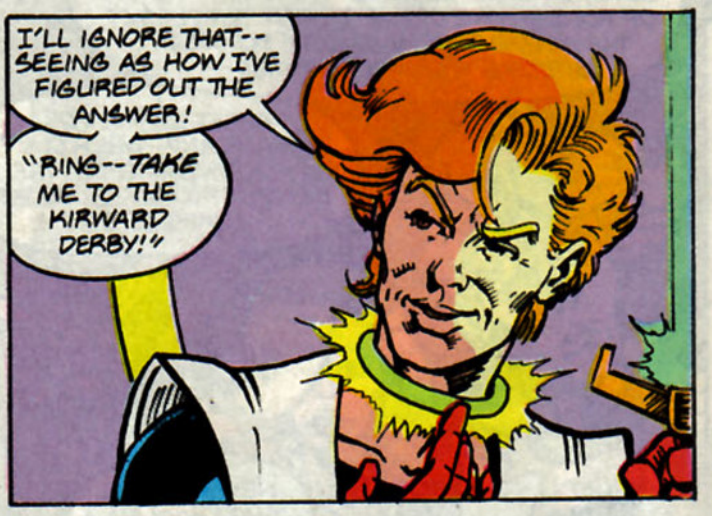
WE'VE INDULGED YOUR SILLINESS BECAUSE YOU'RE A GREAT FIGHTER. BUT WE'RE CALLING IN THAT FAVOR. YOU FIGHT ALONGSIDE SLASH AND US.
UNDERSTAND ME?
I HEAR YOU.
FORWARD, ONKO--INTO THE FIGHT.

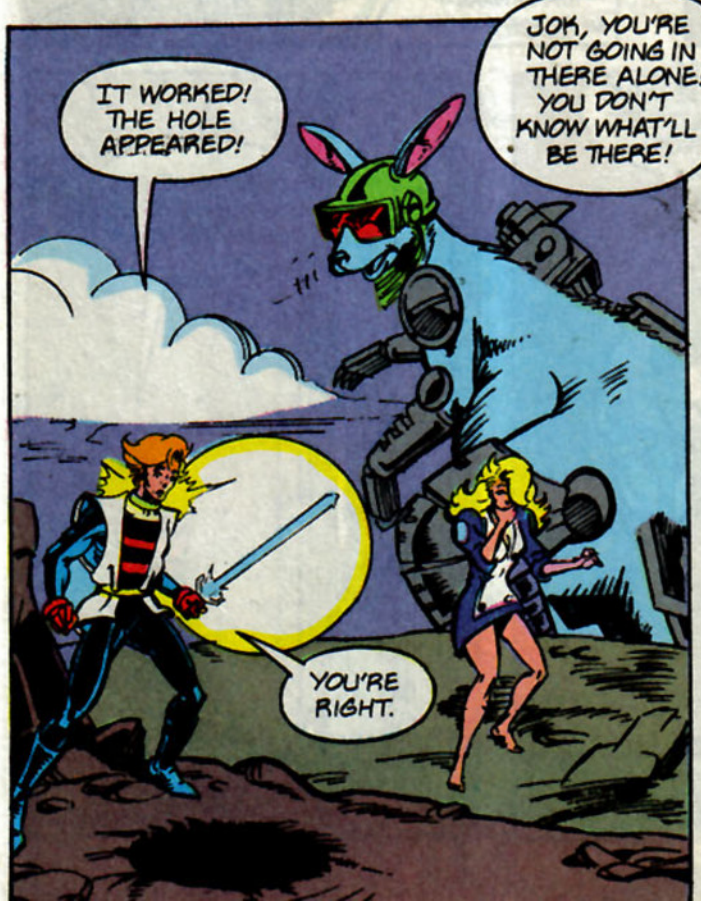
SQUAWWWK!
WHAT BITTER, COSMIC IRONY THAT I MUST DO IT BESIDE MY DEADLIEST FOE--!

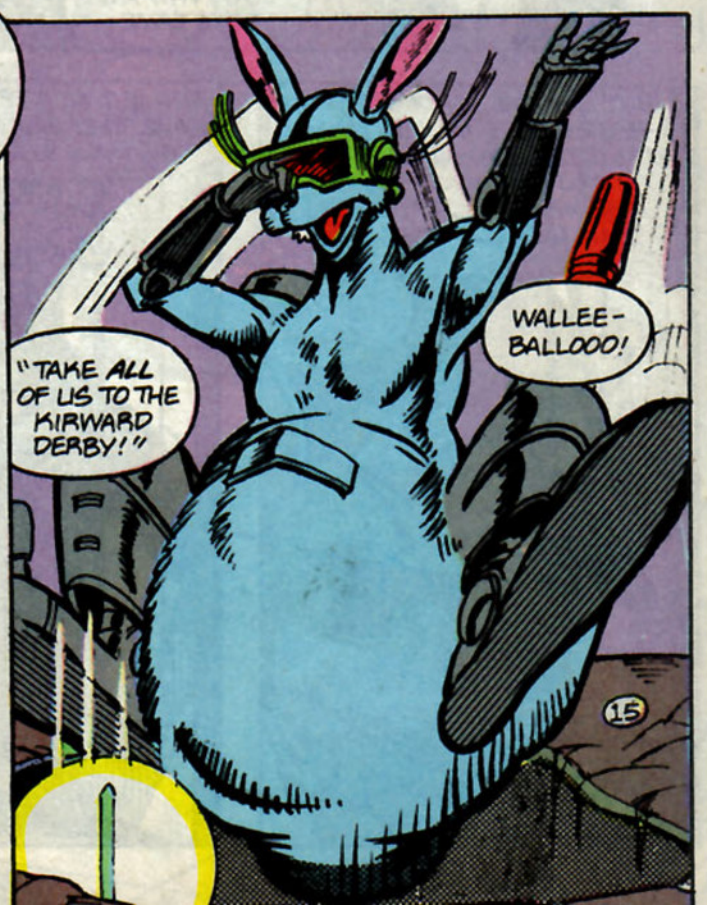

MAYBE THESE TWO TALISMANS WILL LEAD YOU TO THE THIRD--!
IT WORKED LAST TIME, YEAH.*
"SWORD, SHOW US THE WAY TO THE KIRWARD DERBY!"
* LAST ISSUE.

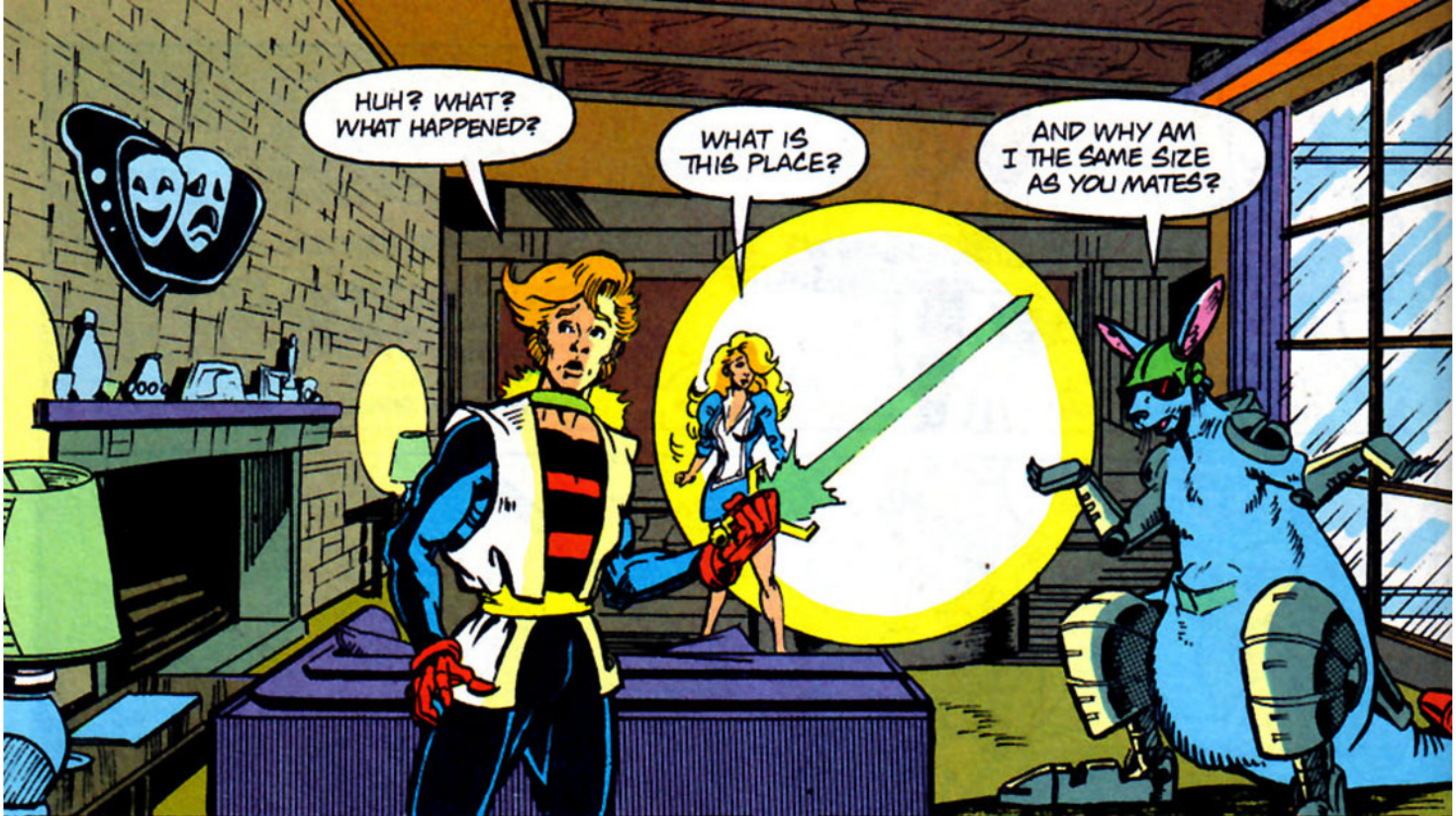

NOTHING. GLOWS A LITTLE MORE--!
GREAT ELVIS, YOU DON'T THINK--SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T EXIST ANY LONGER?

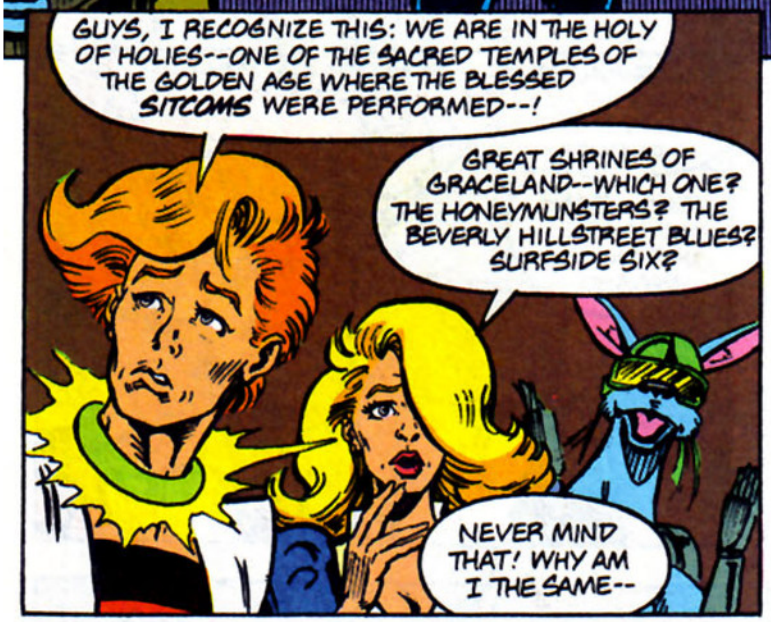

RIGHT. SUPPOSE SOME DINKUM CHEESEBALL BROKE IT LIKE SOMEBODY DID TO THE ORB!

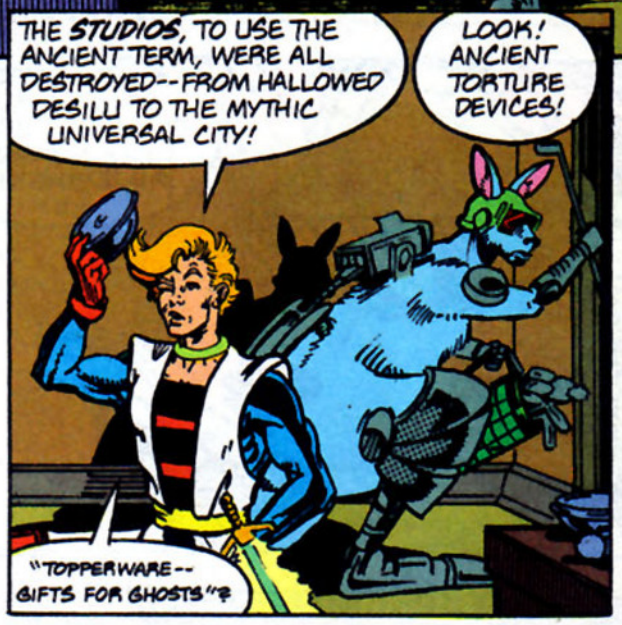

I'LL IGNORE THAT--SEEING AS HOW I'VE FIGURED OUT THE ANSWER!
"RING--TAKE ME TO THE KIRWARD DERBY!"

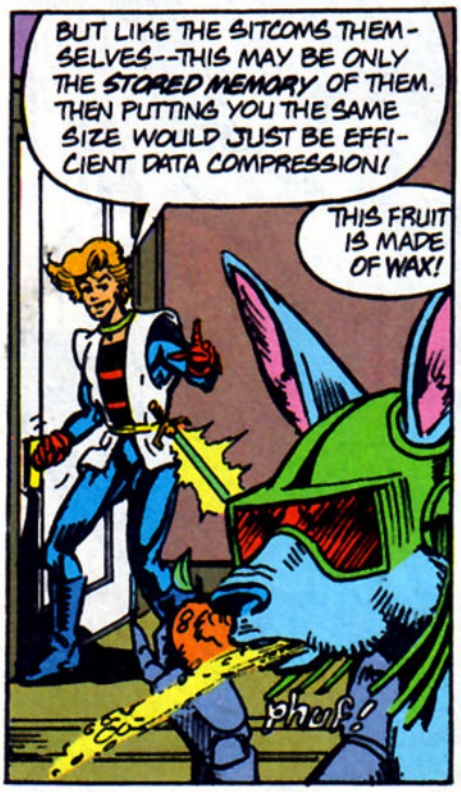

IT WORKED! THE HOLE APPEARED!
JOK, YOU'RE NOT GOING IN THERE ALONE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'LL BE THERE!
YOU'RE RIGHT.

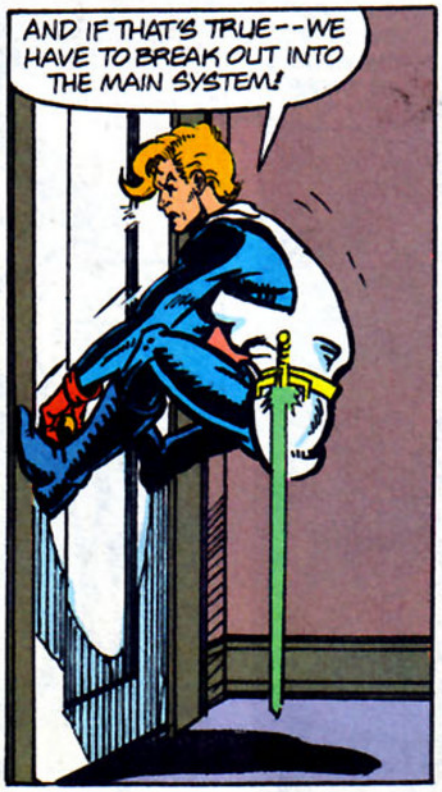

"TAKE ALL OF US TO THE KIRWARD DERBY!"
WALLEE-BALLOOO!

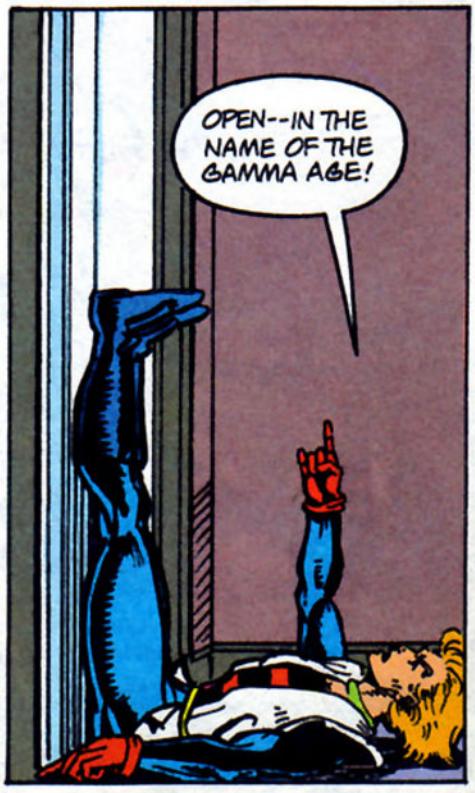

HUH? WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
AND WHY AM I THE SAME SIZE AS YOU MATES?

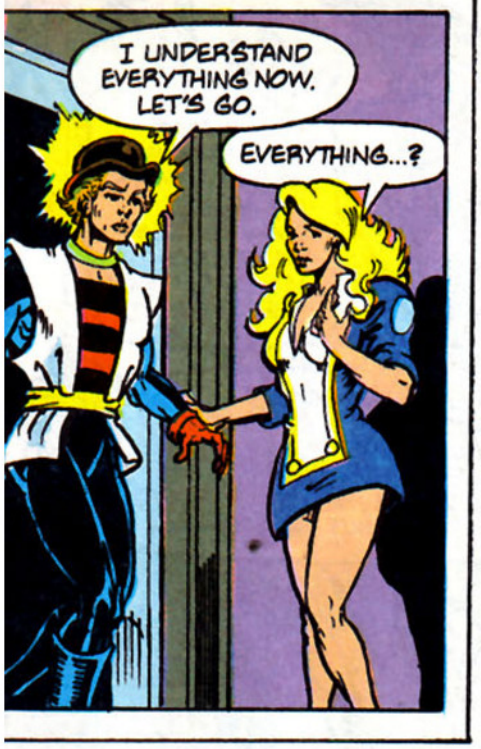

GUYS, I RECOGNIZE THIS: WE ARE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES--ONE OF THE SACRED TEMPLES OF THE GOLDEN AGE WHERE THE BLESSED SITCOMS WERE PERFORMED--!
GREAT SHRINES OF GRACELAND--WHICH ONE? THE HONEYMUNSTERS? THE BEVERLY HILLSTREET BLUES? SURFSIDE SIX?
NEVER MIND THAT! WHY AM I THE SAME--

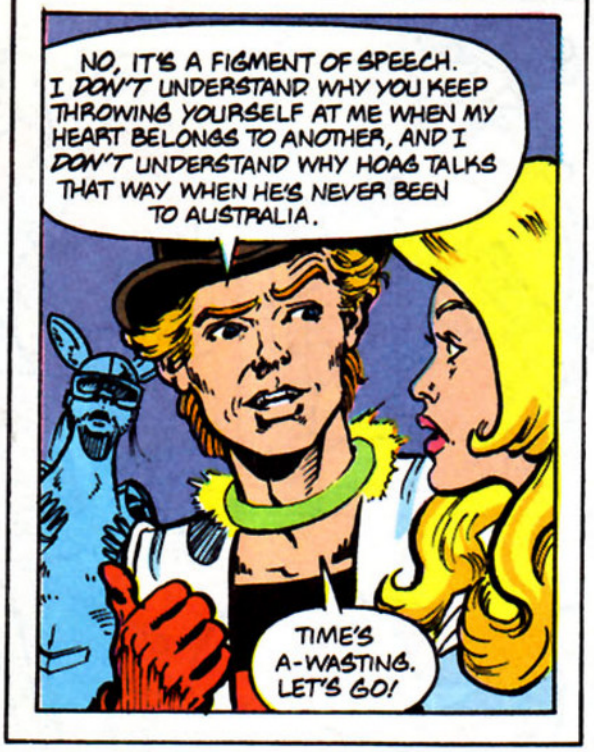

THE STUDIOS, TO USE THE ANCIENT TERM, WERE ALL DESTROYED--FROM HALLOWED DESILU TO THE MYTHIC UNIVERSAL CITY!
LOOK! ANCIENT TORTURE DEVICES!
"TOPPERWARE--GIFTS FOR GHOSTS"?


BUT LIKE THE SITCOMS THEMSELVES--THIS MAY BE ONLY THE STORED MEMORY OF THEM. THEN PUTTING YOU THE SAME SIZE WOULD JUST BE EFFICIENT DATA COMPRESSION!
THIS FRUIT IS MADE OF WAX!
Pheuf!


AND IF THAT'S TRUE--WE HAVE TO BREAK OUT INTO THE MAIN SYSTEM!


OPEN--IN THE NAME OF THE GAMMA AGE!





MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE MUSHROOM--

KEEP AT IT, HANDLERS! MY SLUGNOIDS ARE BACKING YOU UP ALL THE WAY! DWEEMISH, CAN'T YOU EAT ANY FASTER?

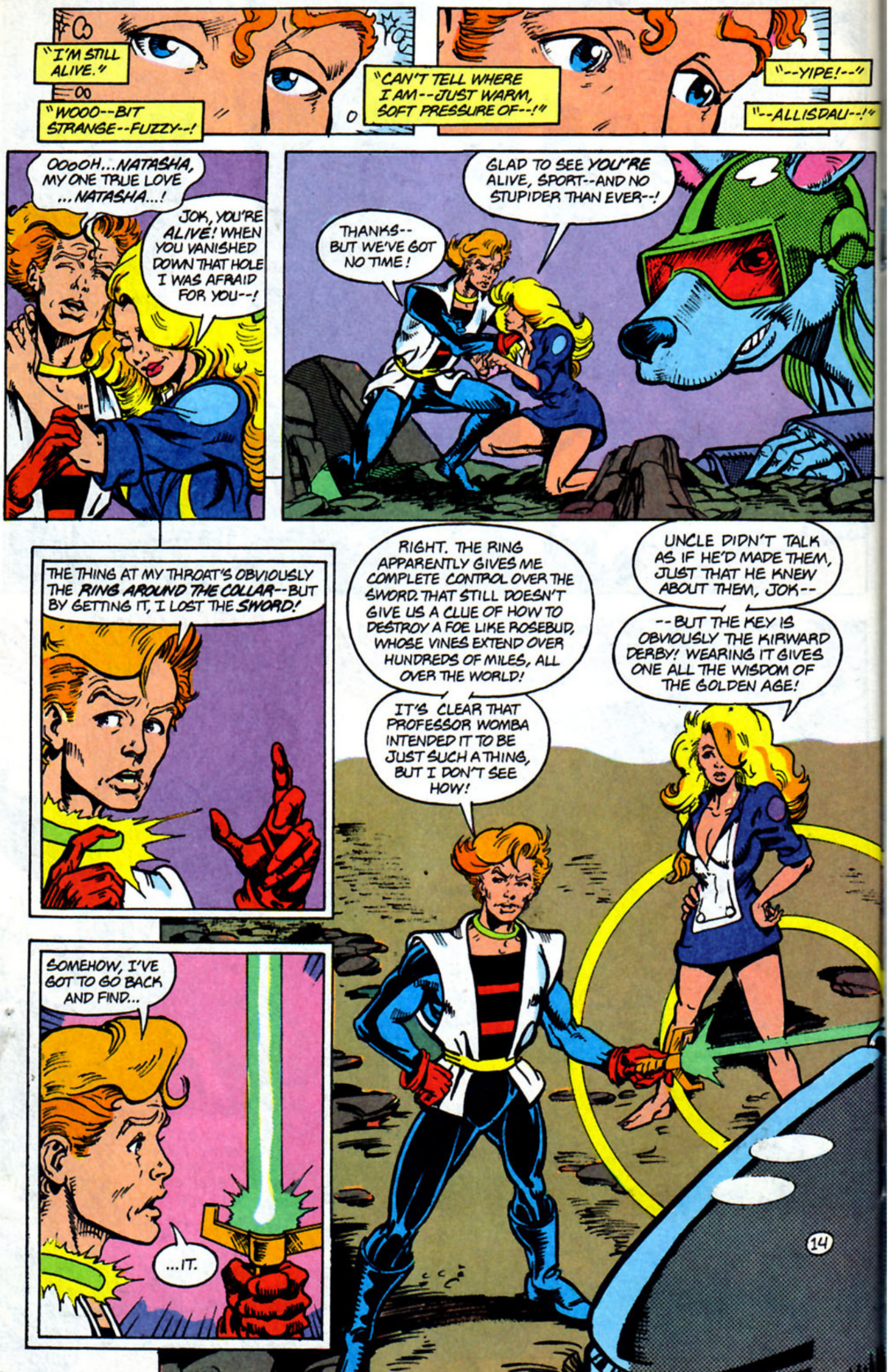
TRYING--!

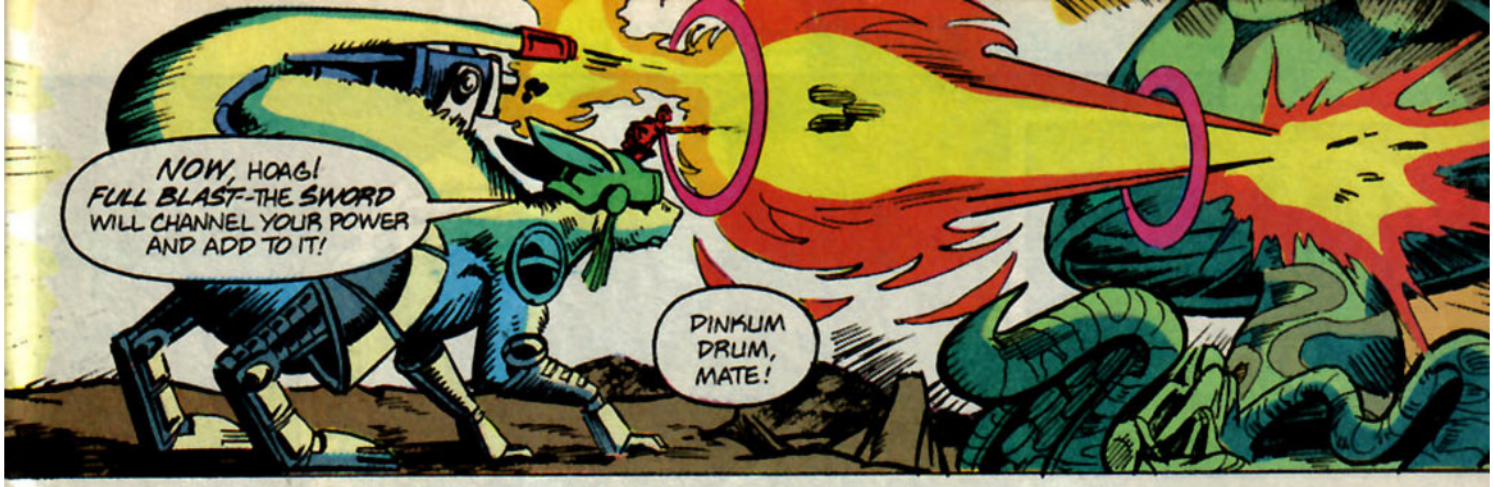
POOF!

THESE SPORES ARE THE WORST, SLASH!

ODD, IS IT NOT, RIDDLEY MCMANN, THAT WE TWO ARCH-ENEMIES SHOULD FIND OURSELVES FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF MANKIND?
STRANGE INDEED! ELVIS MUST BE SMILING IN HIS HEAVEN AT THIS IRONIC SCENE!
BUT IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE EVEN THAT MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH...!
STAND BACK! ALL OF YOU!
WHAT IN--?
BY THE BLUE SUEDE! IT'S...

LET ME HANDLE THIS!


"I'M STILL ALIVE."
"WOOO--BIT STRANGE--FUZZY--!
"CAN'T TELL WHERE I AM--JUST WARM, SOFT PRESSURE OF--!"
"--YIPE!--"
"--ALLISDAU--!"
OOOOH...NATASHA, MY ONE TRUE LOVE ...NATASHA...!
JOK, YOU'RE ALIVE! WHEN YOU VANISHED DOWN THAT HOLE I WAS AFRAID FOR YOU--!
GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE ALIVE, SPORT--AND NO STUPIDER THAN EVER--!
THANKS--BUT WE'VE GOT NO TIME!
THE THING AT MY THROAT'S OBVIOUSLY THE RING AROUND THE COLLAR--BUT BY GETTING IT, I LOST THE SWORD!
RIGHT. THE RING APPARENTLY GIVES ME COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE SWORD. THAT STILL DOESN'T GIVE US A CLUE OF HOW TO DESTROY A FOE LIKE ROSEBUD, WHOSE VINES EXTEND OVER HUNDREDS OF MILES, ALL OVER THE WORLD!
UNCLE DIDN'T TALK AS IF HE'D MADE THEM, JUST THAT HE KNEW ABOUT THEM, JOK--
--BUT THE KEY IS OBVIOUSLY THE KIRWARD DERBY! WEARING IT GIVES ONE ALL THE WISDOM OF THE GOLDEN AGE!
IT'S CLEAR THAT PROFESSOR WOMBA INTENDED IT TO BE JUST SUCH A THING, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW!
SOMEHOW, I'VE GOT TO GO BACK AND FIND...
...IT.
14

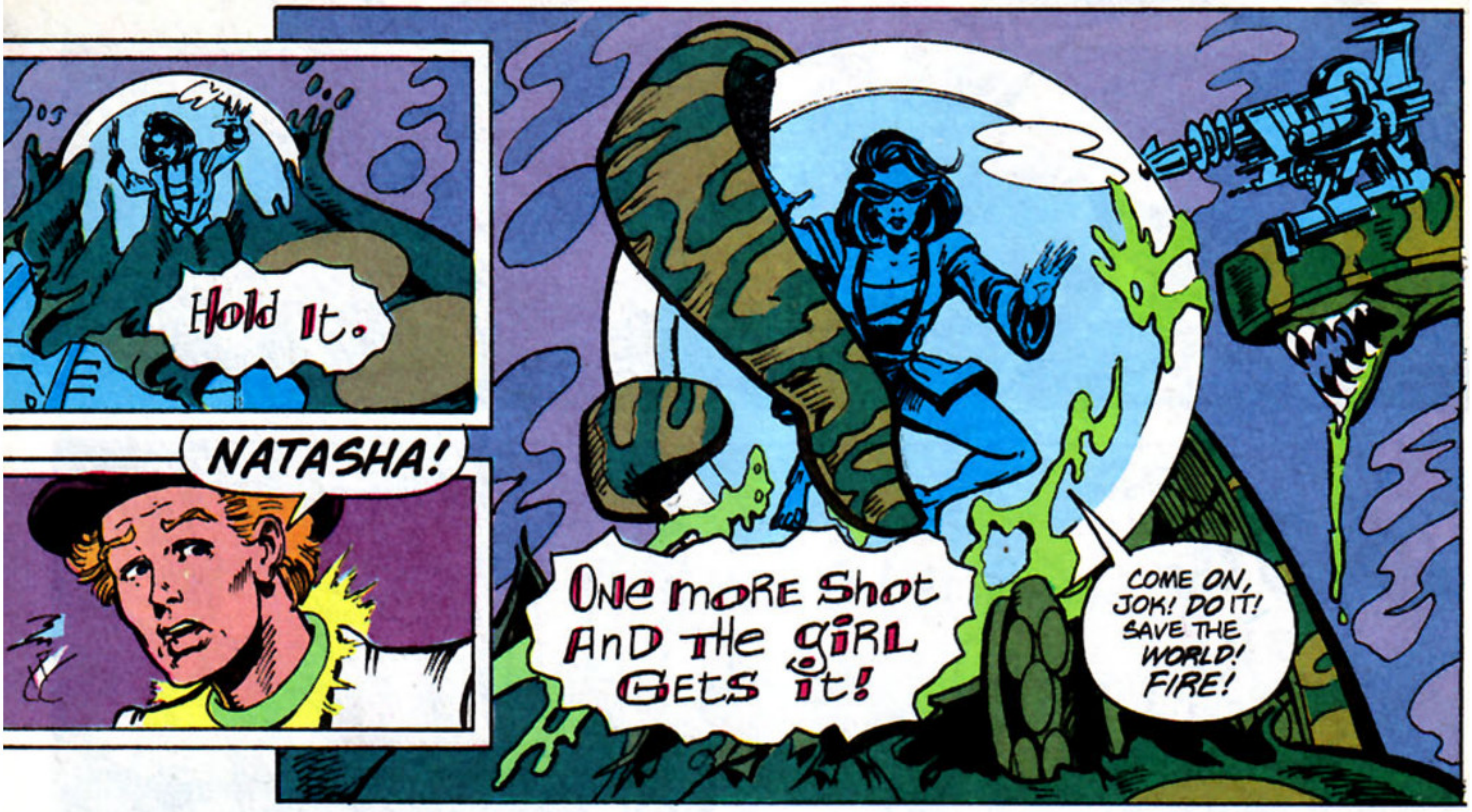

NOW, HOAG! FULL BLAST--THE SWORD WILL CHANNEL YOUR POWER AND ADD TO IT!
DINKUM DRUM, MATE!

THE THING'S SCREAMING!
AND IN ROSEBUD'S VOICE--MAGNIFIED A THOUSAND TIMES!

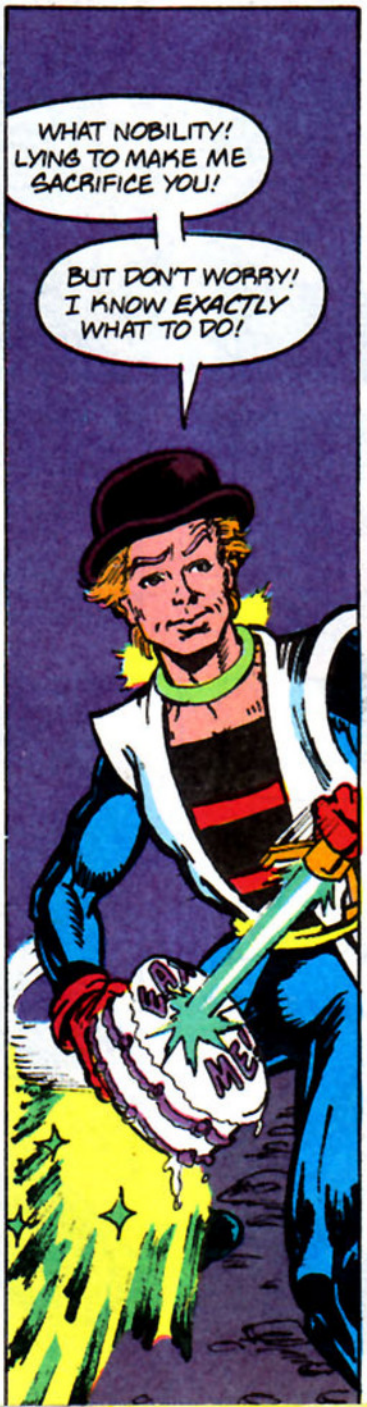
ARRGHHH!
LOOK! WHERE HOAG AND JOK STRUCK--THE MUSHROOM'S BEEN TURNED TO METAL!

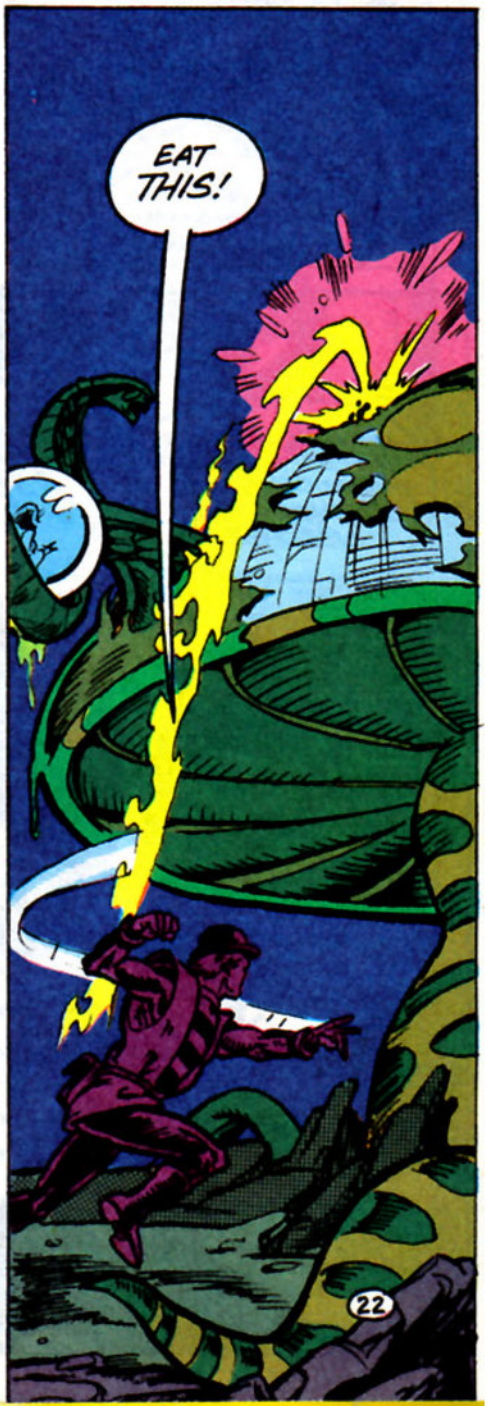
NOW, ALL UNITS--ALL GAM-MARAUDERS, ALL SLUGNOIDS, ALL BIOBORGS--
--FIRE!

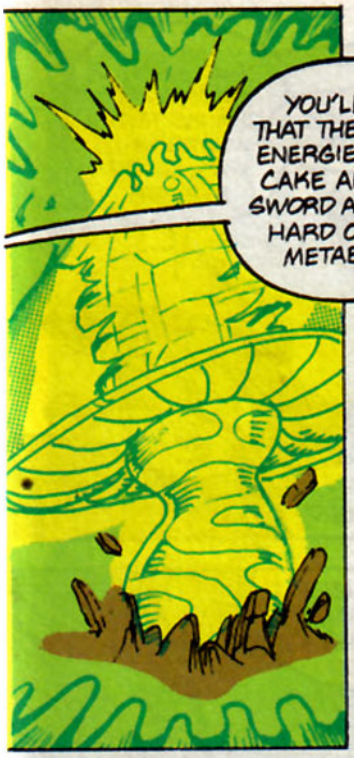
FIRE! FIRE! FIRE FOR THE SAKE OF CIVILIZATION!

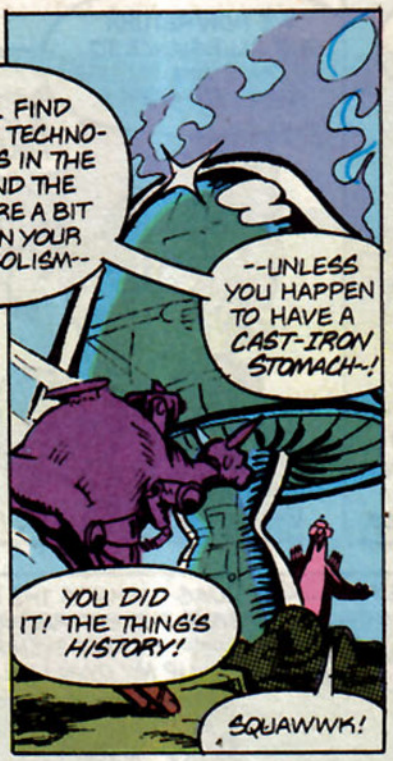

Hold it.
NATASHA!
One more shot and the girl gets it!
COME ON, JOK! DO IT! SAVE THE WORLD! FIRE!

YOU AREN'T GOING TO LET THIS THING CONQUER THE WORLD BECAUSE OF THE ADOLESCENT CRUSH YOU'VE GOT ON ME? YOU BRAINLESS DWEEB! I COULD NEVER LOVE SOMEONE AS CALLOW AND UNCULTURED AS YOU!
DO YOU HEAR ME, JOK? ILSO DIAMON AND I HAVE BEEN LOVERS FOR YEARS!
I...


WHAT NOBILITY! LYING TO MAKE ME SACRIFICE YOU!
BUT DON'T WORRY! I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO!


EAT THIS!



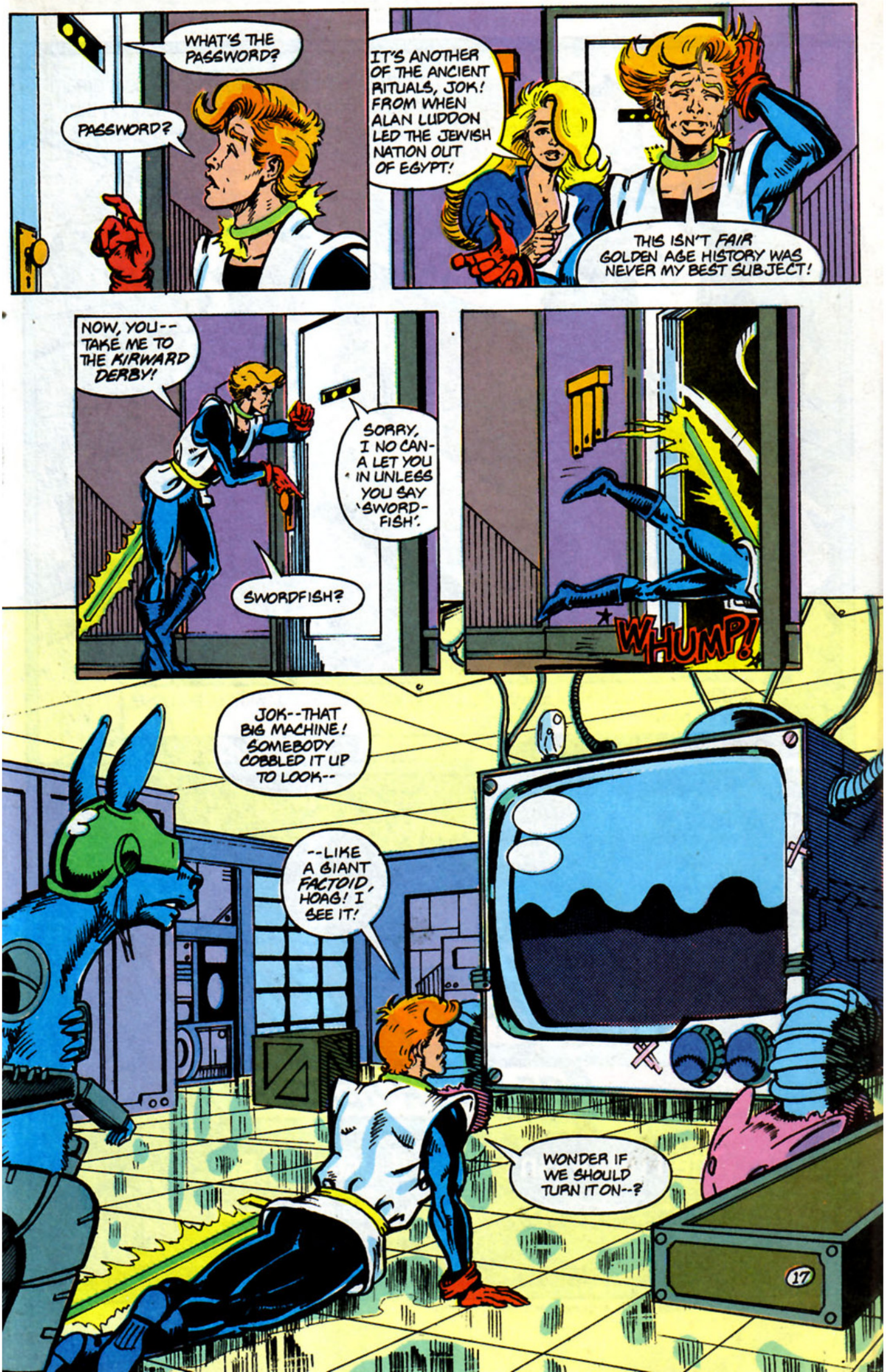

YOU'LL FIND THAT THE TECHNO-ENERGIES IN THE CAKE AND THE SWORD ARE A BIT HARD ON YOUR METABOLISM--
--UNLESS YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE A CAST-IRON STOMACH--!
YOU DID IT! THE THING'S HISTORY!
SQUAWWK!

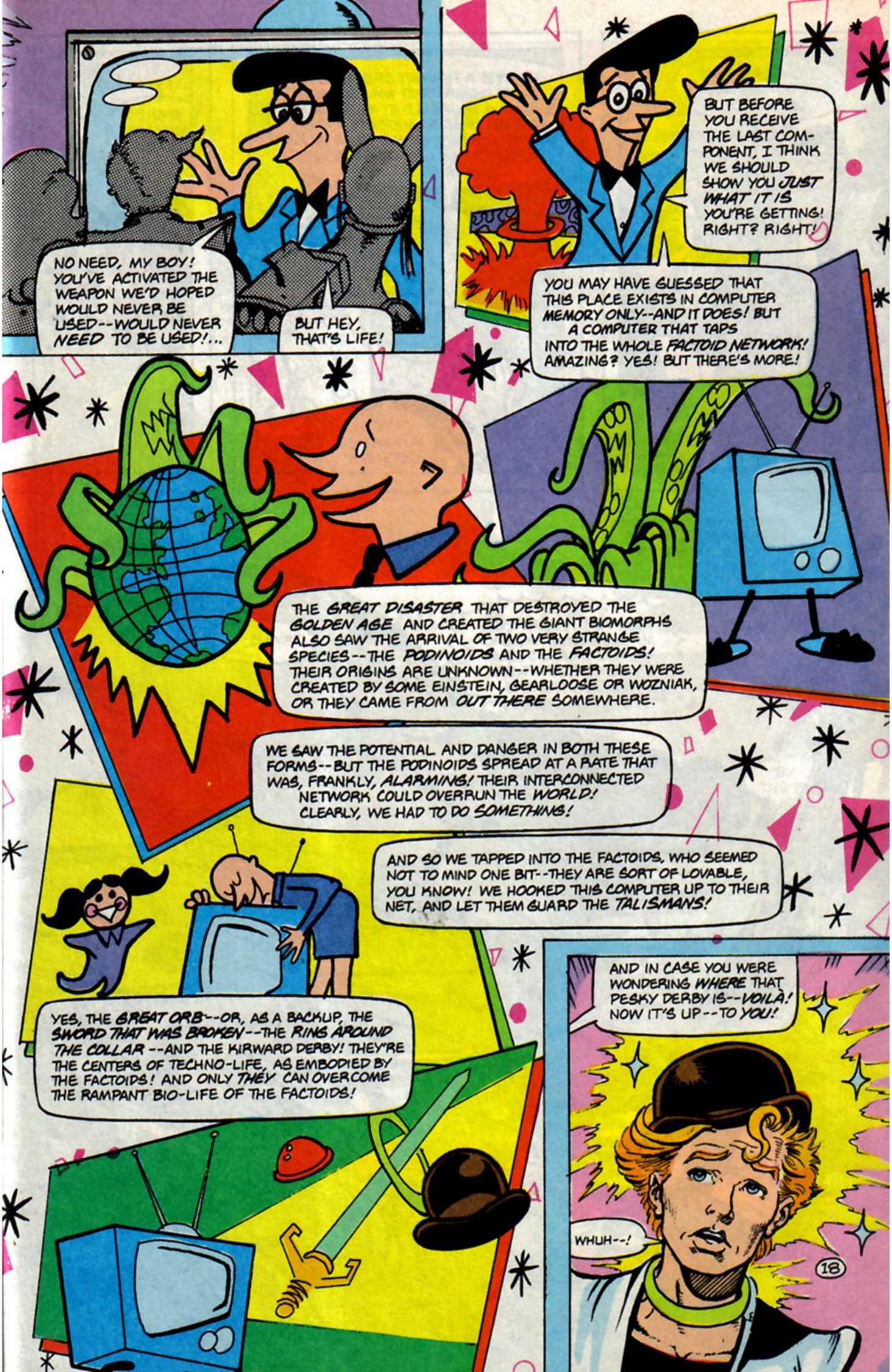
THE DERBY AND THE RING--THE KNOWLEDGE, THE POWER--LEAVING...
AH WELL. IT DID THE JOB.
NATASHA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, JOK.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE, JOK, AND I THANK YOU FOR THAT...
...BUT I DON'T LOVE YOU. I DON'T EVEN LIKE YOU--

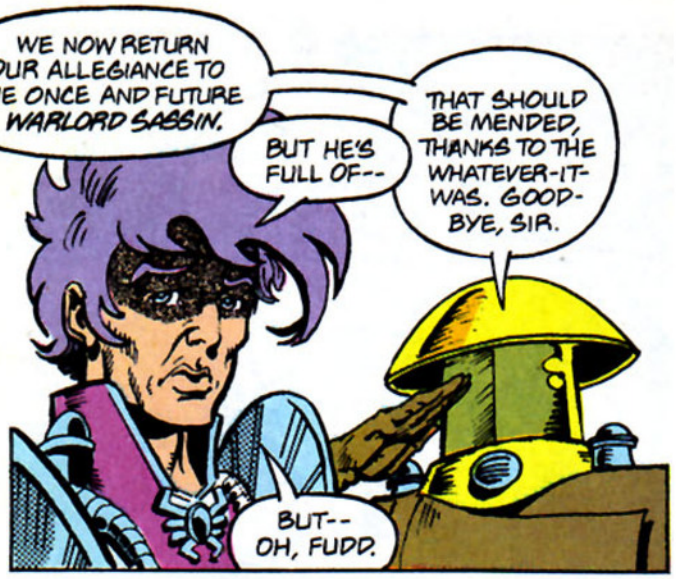
AND ILSO AND I ARE LOVERS.

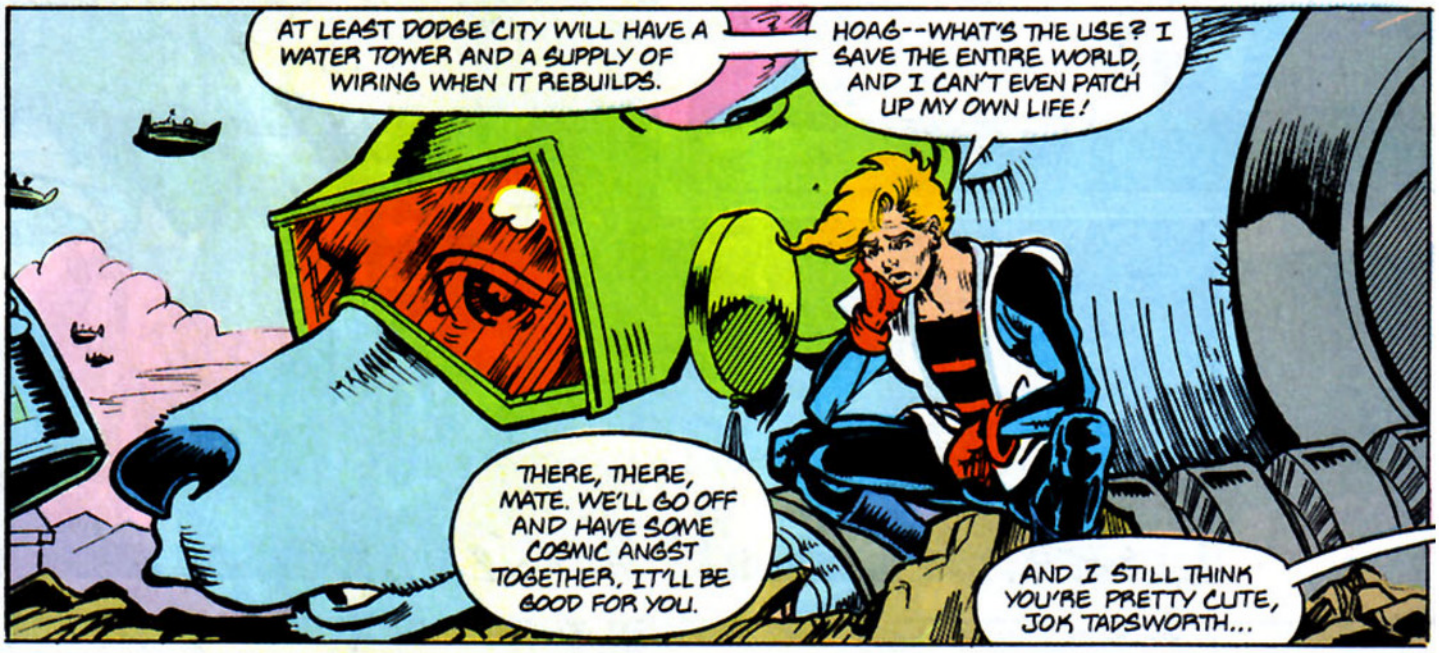
GET LOST, JOK.
GUHH.

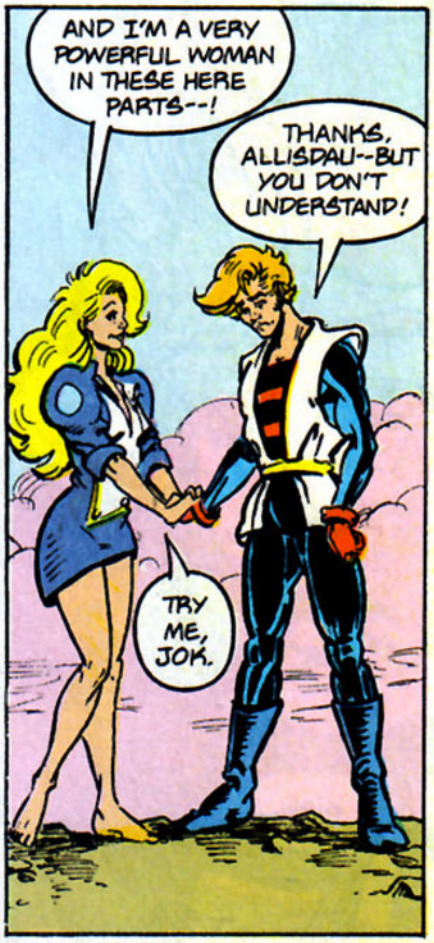

WHAT'S THE PASSWORD?
PASSWORD?
IT'S ANOTHER OF THE ANCIENT RITUALS, JOK! FROM WHEN ALAN LUDDON LED THE JEWISH NATION OUT OF EGYPT!
THIS ISN'T FAIR GOLDEN AGE HISTORY WAS NEVER MY BEST SUBJECT!
NOW, YOU-- TAKE ME TO THE KIRWARD DERBY!
SORRY, I NO CAN-A LET YOU IN UNLESS YOU SAY 'SWORD-FISH'.
SWORDFISH?
WHUMP!
JOK--THAT BIG MACHINE! SOMEBODY COBBLED IT UP TO LOOK--
--LIKE A GIANT FACTOID, HOAG! I SEE IT!
WONDER IF WE SHOULD TURN IT ON--?

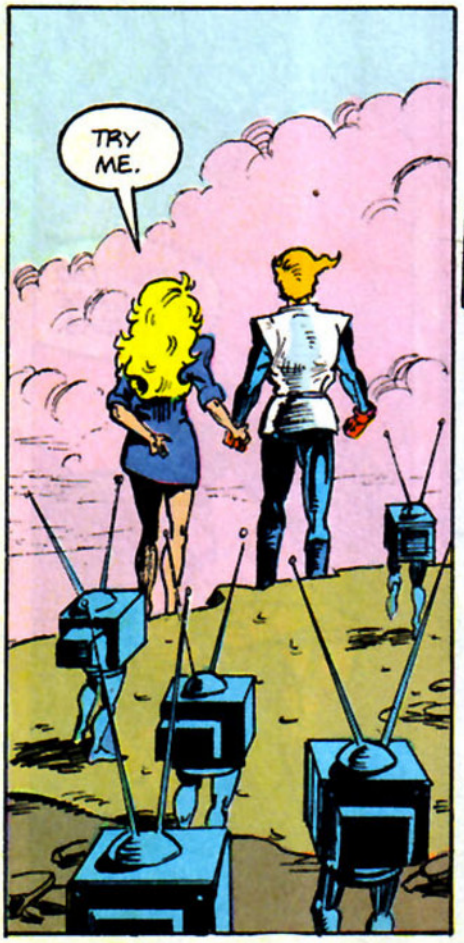

NO NEED, MY BOY! YOU'VE ACTIVATED THE WEAPON WE'D HOPED WOULD NEVER BE USED--WOULD NEVER NEED TO BE USED!...
BUT HEY, THAT'S LIFE!
BUT BEFORE YOU RECEIVE THE LAST COMPONENT, I THINK WE SHOULD SHOW YOU JUST WHAT IT IS YOU'RE GETTING! RIGHT? RIGHT!
YOU MAY HAVE GUESSED THAT THIS PLACE EXISTS IN COMPUTER MEMORY ONLY--AND IT DOES! BUT A COMPUTER THAT TAPS INTO THE WHOLE FACTOID NETWORK! AMAZING? YES! BUT THERE'S MORE!
THE GREAT DISASTER THAT DESTROYED THE GOLDEN AGE AND CREATED THE GIANT BIOMORPHS ALSO SAW THE ARRIVAL OF TWO VERY STRANGE SPECIES--THE PODINOIDS AND THE FACTOIDS! THEIR ORIGINS ARE UNKNOWN--WHETHER THEY WERE CREATED BY SOME EINSTEIN, GEARLOOSE OR WOZNIAK, OR THEY CAME FROM OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.
WE SAW THE POTENTIAL AND DANGER IN BOTH THESE FORMS--BUT THE PODINOIDS SPREAD AT A RATE THAT WAS, FRANKLY, ALARMING! THEIR INTERCONNECTED NETWORK COULD OVERRUN THE WORLD! CLEARLY, WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING!
AND SO WE TAPPED INTO THE FACTOIDS, WHO SEEMED NOT TO MIND ONE BIT--THEY ARE SORT OF LOVABLE, YOU KNOW! WE HOOKED THIS COMPUTER UP TO THEIR NET, AND LET THEM GUARD THE TALISMANS!
YES, THE GREAT ORB--OR, AS A BACKUP, THE SWORD THAT WAS BROKEN--THE RING AROUND THE COLLAR--AND THE KIRWARD DERBY! THEY'RE THE CENTERS OF TECHNO-LIFE, AS EMBODIED BY THE FACTOIDS! AND ONLY THEY CAN OVERCOME THE RAMPANT BIO-LIFE OF THE FACTOIDS!
AND IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING WHERE THAT PESKY DERBY IS--VOILA! NOW IT'S UP--TO YOU!
WHUH--!

I'M SORRY, MY LORD SLASH, BUT WE SLUGNOIDS CAN FOLLOW YOU NO LONGER.
WHAT? WHAT'S THE MEANING OF--
SNAP!
EVEN IF IT WAS NECESSARY, YOU DID WHAT NO SLUGNOID LEADER CAN EVER BE ALLOWED TO DO: SOMETHING NOBLE.


WE NOW RETURN OUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE ONCE AND FUTURE WARLORD SASSIN.
BUT HE'S FULL OF--
THAT SHOULD BE MENDED, THANKS TO THE WHATEVER-IT-WAS. GOOD-BYE, SIR.
BUT-- OH, FUDD.


AT LEAST DODGE CITY WILL HAVE A WATER TOWER AND A SUPPLY OF WIRING WHEN IT REBUILDS.
HOAG--WHAT'S THE USE? I SAVE THE ENTIRE WORLD, AND I CAN'T EVEN PATCH UP MY OWN LIFE!
THERE, THERE, MATE. WE'LL GO OFF AND HAVE SOME COSMIC ANGST TOGETHER. IT'LL BE GOOD FOR YOU.
AND I STILL THINK YOU'RE PRETTY CUTE, JOK TADSWORTH...


AND I'M A VERY POWERFUL WOMAN IN THESE HERE PARTS--!
THANKS, ALLISDAU--BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
TRY ME, JOK.


TRY ME.

next:
ELVIS
IS
EVERY-WHERE!
MA'AM!

A
VIGILANTE
Scan
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